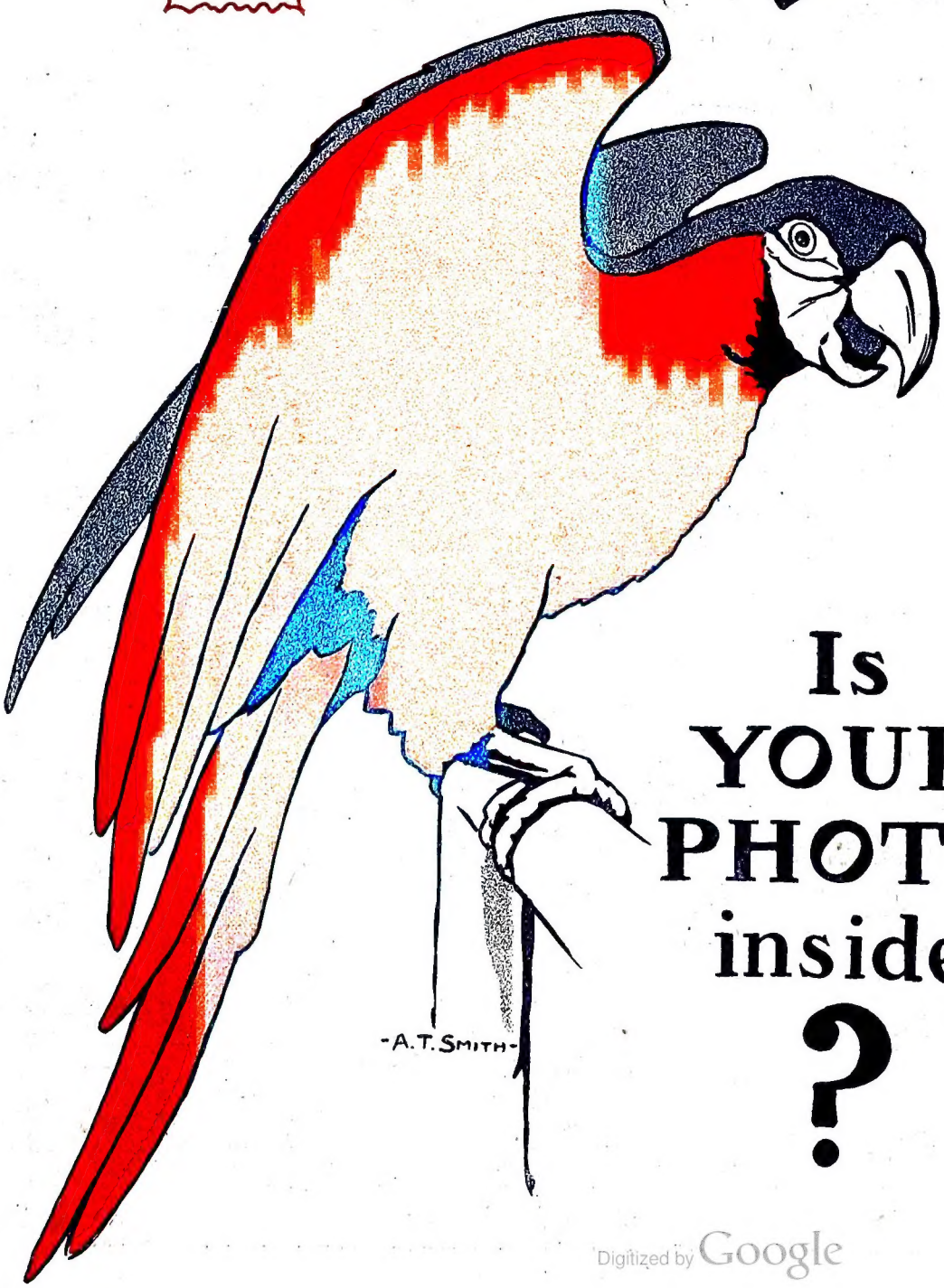
PEARSON'S

SHORT STORIES

No. 671.
For Week
Ending
November 9,
1901.
ONE PENNY



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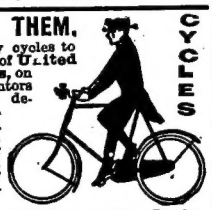

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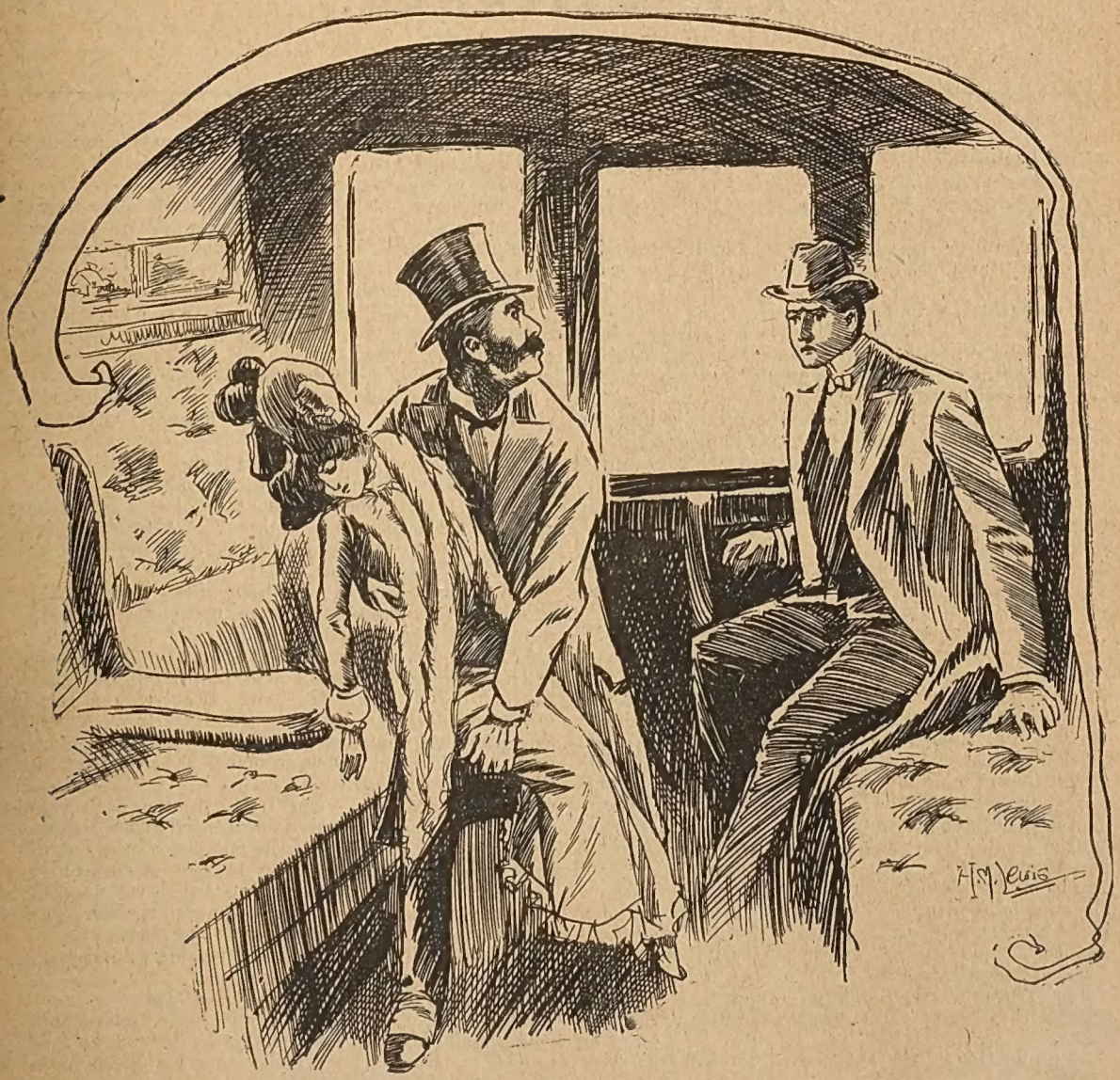
SHORT STORIES.

No. 671.] For the Week Ending November 9th, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

Adventures of an Actress.



"She's not asleep," he said hoarsely. "She's unconscious!"

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A THRILLING INSTALMENT.

THE ADVENTURES OF AN ACTRESS.

XIV.—OUTLAWED.

By DONOVAN MART.

CHAPTER I.

"TREVANNION, by all that's wonderful! What brings you to Manchester?"

The man addressed looked curiously in the face of the individual who accosted him.

"Your voice is familiar," he answered somewhat dubiously; "but I'm hanged if I can remember your face."

A laugh answered him.

"And yet we've rubbed shoulders together often enough before Lucius Trevannion, Esquire, thought fit to take up stage life. Didn't I take nearly five pounds off you at poker one night?"

"Horace Caldecott!" broke in the other, a light of sudden recognition dawning on his countenance.

"Yes; but not so loud, man. I'm incog. here, but I should like a talk with you. Come up to my rooms at the Grand Hotel and tell me how the world has fared with you since last we met."

Somewhat mystified, the other accepted the invitation, and ere long the two men were seated in a comfortable private sitting-room with an open bottle of champagne to cement their friendship.

"And now tell me what you are doing in Manchester?" began Caldecott, handing Trevannion a cigarette and lighting one himself.

"I'm taking a small part," was the answer, "in the *Good Samaritan* Company. I was looking for a 'shop' some weeks ago when an accident happened to a man named Monteith, who was taking a small part in the play, and Venables, the acting manager, asked me to fill the *rôle*. I accepted, and when Monteith came back—which he did at the beginning of the week—sooner than be out of a 'shop' altogether again I got transferred to a part that is nothing more than to walk on."

A curious expression had come into Caldecott's face as he listened to Trevannion's bare story, for it was he who had been responsible for the accident that had caused Monteith to temporarily relinquish his part in the *Good Samaritan* Campany.

"You're lucky," he said lightly, "to have got into the Company that boasts such a star as the adorable Hazel Harlow."

At the mention of the girl's name Trevannion's face darkened.

"That's rather a doubtful blessing," he answered curtly, exhaling a huge cloud of tobacco smoke as though to hide his glowering countenance.

Caldecott's eyes glistened.

"From your tone," he said, "one would almost think that there is no love lost between you and Miss Harlow. A pretty business that has been this week, culminating in the death of the Duchess of Stanchester. A fine advertisement for Miss Hazel, if ever there was one."

Trevannion made no answer. It was plain that his companion's mention of Hazel's name had turned his thoughts into a new channel. He sat in moody silence gazing darkly at nothing, a far away look in his eyes.

"What's the matter, old man?" asked Caldecott insidiously. "You seem mighty hipped. Anything I can do for you?"

"I don't know," came the curt reply.

Then suddenly the actor sprang to his feet.

"Look here, Caldecott," he said. "We used to be pretty thick at one time—you and I. If I were to take you into my confidence, could I be quite sure that you wouldn't go back on me?"

"My dear fellow, I am discreetness personified. I should be very happy to help you in any way I could, if only for old acquaintance's sake."

"Very well, then," said the other, plunging into speech as though relieved at being able to at last unburden his mind. "I'll be frank with you. If there's one person in the world that I hate it's Hazel Harlow. When I first joined the company I'll admit I thought she was the most beautiful and perfect woman I had ever seen, and, like nearly every man who knows her, I fell head over ears in love with her. And I thought the jade reciprocated my affection. One day, encouraged by her graciousness, I asked her to be my wife and she refused me, told me she had no idea of giving me any encouragement, and left me with that consolation. And ever since that day my feelings have gone right round to the other point of the compass. I can't stand her at any price. In fact—I'm frank with you, as you see—I wouldn't mind paying her out for her having deceived me."

The speech just made was a good index to Lucius Trevannion's character. He was weak, self-opiniated young man, who had thought that he had only to throw himself at Hazel's feet to be accepted with acclamation, and the fall of his pride when he discovered that Hazel had no other feelings than kindly personal regard for

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him, had been so swelled by the self-fancied blow administered to his pride, that his so-called love had veered round to the opposite extreme.

Caldecott read all this almost at a glance.

"I am indeed sorry for you, Trevannion," he said feelingly; "and I wonder what you'll say when you hear that Hazel Harlow played me a much dirtier trick than that. I knew her in the old days when she was only a simply country farmer's daughter. I was Squire of the village in which he lived. Well, I fell in love with her, and as an earnest of my affections offered to marry her at any time she liked. The father was pleased, and she also consented to become my wife. (What a wilful prevarication of the truth this statement was those who have followed the fortunes of Hazel Harlow will readily admit.) Well, the wedding day was fixed and then she gave me the slip, ran away to London, and wormed herself into the *Good Samaritan* Company. And there the story, so far as the similitude between your experience and mine ceases; but unfortunately I am still madly in love with Hazel Harlow. Yes, I'll admit it, and I have sworn that I'll make her my wife by fair means or by foul."

Caldecott ceased speaking.

Trevannion looked at him curiously, surprised at the sudden turn in events that had proved Caldecott to be also bound up in the life of Hazel Harlow.

"Well, it strikes me," said the actor, after a few moment's pause, "that we might work together in this. I shouldn't at all mind doing you a good turn, and if I could do anything to make Hazel Harlow your wife, and at the same time pay off old scores without actually running any risk myself, I'm perfectly willing to help you, though as to honestly wishing you joy of Miss Hazel—well, I can't do that, and, indeed, I am sorry for the man who ever becomes the husband of such an iceberg."

"Work together," cried Caldecott hoarsely. "Why, I should think we could. I've been waiting for a chance like this for weeks. I'll own to you that I have not been idle ever since Hazel joined the Company, but somehow Fate has always stepped in and snatched her out of my grasp just as success has seemed assured. And another thing. I don't suppose you're particularly flush, if I may ask you the question without offence; and as I've got more money than I know what to do with, well——"

He broke off and looked significantly into Trevannion's face.

The actor coloured and gave vent to a nervous laugh.

"You've hit the nail on the head there," he said; "it was the Turf proved my undoing. There was a time when a fiver was what five bob is to me now, and since I have become an actor I have lost my pride. There is no room for such a commodity in our profession."

"Very well, then," continued the other, "that is settled. I'm perfectly willing to give you five hundred pounds on the day that sees Hazel Harlow Mrs. Horace Caldecott."

"Well, that's all very nice," put in Trevannion; "but surely you're getting on a bit fast. I always thought that one had to catch one's hare before one could cook it. You seem anxious to do the latter process first."

"But I have a plan," answered Caldecott quickly. "The only thing is there's not too much time to carry it out. You are due out of Manchester to-morrow—Sunday morning, I believe. Well, to-day is Saturday, isn't it?"

"Yes," answered the other. "What then?"

"Then there is nothing more but for me to jump straight away into telling you my idea of how we are going to get hold of Miss Hazel Harlow. I have been lying low in Manchester all the week, and I have not been idle. The train is all ready laid, it only wants firing. And you are the man who is going to do that for me."

"Oh, that sounds all right, and what are *you* going to do?"

Caldecott looked at his watch.

"As soon as I have laid the details of the scheme before you," he said, "I shall rush off to the station, jump into a train, and soon be speeding away as fast as the locomotive can drag me."

Trevannion looked mystified.

"That sounds a very nice programme, so far as you are concerned," he said with a forced laugh; "but I don't quite see where I come in. Am I to play the part of professional kidnapper all on my own hook while you take a journey to Paris? If so, I think I'll cry off—five hundred pounds or no five hundred pounds."

"Not so fast, not so fast," said the other impatiently. "We won't waste any more time. I'll tell you in as few words as possible the plan that I had sketched out before I met you, but that had seemed doomed to failure owing to the fact of having no ally. So please give me your very best attention."

And without more ado he plunged into the recital of the plot that had for its aim the downfall of the unsuspicious Hazel.

CHAPTER II.

It was Sunday morning, and a cold, dismal morning enough, as is consistent with late autumn and smoky Manchester.

The train that was to carry the *Good Samaritan* Company to Nottingham to inaugurate another week of the provincial tour was due to leave the great manufacturing city at about eleven o'clock. It was half-past eight, and Hazel and Jenny were sitting at breakfast somewhat drearily waiting for the time when they would have to set out for the station.

"What a blessing it is to have Mr. Monteith back with us once again," said Jenny. "Mr. Trevannion made a good enough substitute so far as the acting went, and yet he is nothing like Eric Monteith in private life."

"No, indeed," answered Hazel warmly. "I have come to look upon Mr. Monteith as my guardian angel. I like Mr. Trevannion well enough, but I should have liked him better if he hadn't tried to make love to me."

"I still live in hopes of seeing you Mrs. Monteith," said Jenny smilingly. "I can't think why you don't become engaged to him, Hazel. It isn't fair on the rest of us. Why, I'm not the only girl in the company who would give a good deal to be able to become Mrs. Eric."

Hazel did not answer for a few minutes.

"I don't know what is wrong with me," she said slowly, at last. "I'm awfully fond of Mr. Monteith, and sometimes I think that I really am in love with him, and just as I say to myself that I really will listen to his suit, I begin to have doubts again. I wonder if there is something wrong with my compostiiton. Or whether it is that I am so anxious to become a great actress that I haven't time to think about anything else?"

"I'll tell you what I think," answered Jenny slily; "I think you're a bold, bad girl. You like to have as

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many strings to your bow as you can, and all the time you are madly in love with Master Eric."

At that moment there came a knock at the door, and their landlady entered, with the announcement that a Mr. Trevannion was outside, and would like a word with the two young ladies on a matter of importance. The next moment Trevannion came into the room, looking strangely heated and flustered, as though he had been brought thither in great haste.

"I am so sorry to interrupt you, ladies," he began quickly, "but I have been rushing round for Venables collecting the company. Venables has made a mistake about the train. It is earlier than he thought, and leaves in a few minutes. I've got a cab outside, and if you can come with me, we shall be just in time to catch it. And I, for one, shan't be sorry to get out of smoky Manchester. Monteith and Venables are rushing off collecting the other people."

For a moment a slight pang of disappointment went through Hazel's heart. Why had not Eric been deputed to apprise them of the fact of the mistake? But she said nothing of this, neither did any suspicion cross her or Jenny's mind at the somewhat unexpected intelligence. It was just the sort of thing that Venables would have done. He was always making plans, only to alter them at the last moment, and there was nothing in Trevannion's manner to suggest anything irregular. Indeed, he seemed genuinely anxious to help the ladies to make their final preparations and catch the train.

"We shall have to get in where we can," he said; "it's a fast train, and only stops once before reaching Nottingham. If we can't get into the carriage with the others we shall have time to change there. As it is, I am afraid we shall run it rather fine."

There was no time given to Jenny or Hazel to think of anything save the importance of getting away from the lodgings. Neither of them, however, connected Trevannion with anything that might have spelt disaster to either of them. He had never betrayed to Hazel how great the revulsion in his feelings as regards herself was since the day when she had so firmly declined to consider his amatory addresses. In a few minutes the two girls were ready, and now only anxious to be off.

"The sooner we go the sooner we shall be in Nottingham," said Trevannion, "and it's always nice to get to a place early—it gives one more time to look about and find decent diggings."

It was about as disagreeable a morning as could be well imagined. A raw, damp fog hung over the grimy streets. As they rattled along in the vehicle towards the station, Trevannion did not allow his companions much time for thinking over the situation in which they found themselves, but kept up a continuous flow of conversation in order to lull any transient suspicions to rest.

"It's just like Venables," he said, "to make a mistake like that about the train, and it won't be our fault if we miss it. If we do we shall land in Nottingham goodness knows when. Venables said particularly we were to jump in wherever we could, no matter if we saw him on the platform or not. I got your tickets so you needn't bother about that. I daresay when we do turn up at Nottingham it will be to find that half the company has been left behind. I left Venables and Monteith ramping round like a couple of crazy tigers."

In this strain he went on until the station was reached, and, jumping out of the cab, he hurried into the crowded station with the two girls at his heels, now thoroughly infected by his feverish haste.

Trevannion had played his cards well. He knew how nervous and excitable women would be when worked up to such a pitch of hurry, and if only he could keep Hazel and Jenny on the move he felt assured that there could be little obstacle in the way of the success of the scheme concocted by Caldecott.

The train was drawn up on the platform. In the gloom it was impossible to see its whole length.

"Come on!" yelled Trevannion, and just as the guard blew his whistle he tore open the door of a first-class carriage and bundled the two girls almost unceremoniously inside the compartment.

"I think I saw Venables," he said mendaciously, "waving like a man possessed. By Jove, that was a narrow shave," he chuckled to himself. "I wouldn't mind betting that half the company is left behind."

The train moved out of the station, and the two girls began to recover their breath slowly. Then Trevannion produced an elegant little box from his pocket.

"I have some bon-bons here," he said airily, "that I hope will compensate for my having hurried you over your breakfast." And he opened the lid to display a tempting array of sweetmeats such as are dear to every feminine heart. In the centre of the box were two bon-bons of exceptionally alluring appearance—delicate little pink and white confections that looked as though they would melt away to nothing within the mouth. As was natural, both Jenny's and Hazel's eyes turned to the two tempting sweets. They each took one with a laugh and popped them into their mouths. Trevannion helped himself to a less seductive-looking chocolate.

But the sweets did not taste so nice as they looked. There was a sickly sort of hot sweetness about them that struck the two girls simultaneously as being particularly unpleasant. Involuntarily both made wry faces.

"Weren't the sweets nice?" asked Trevannion solicitously, "you must try another. Those elegant looking morsels are often deceptive. They are only got up for show, I believe."

Hazel tried to answer, but an indescribable languor had crept over her, a feeling by no means unpleasant, and yet one that rendered her incapable of speech or action. She looked listlessly across at Jenny, who, strangely enough, seemed equally listless and averse to action. Another moment and Hazel's eyelids drooped; the next moment she leant back as though suddenly lost in a slumber of the deepest kind. It was the same with Jenny. She, too, seemed to be in the arms of Morpheus.

Trevannion sat like a statue for a few seconds, his eyes turning from one to the other of the two girls. Great beads of sweat formed upon his forehead. He was deadly pale. Then he cautiously rose to his feet and took hold of Hazel's hand; he lifted it; it was as heavy as lead; neither did the girl show any sign of movement.

"Thank goodness," he muttered, "the opiate has worked. He's a smart man, is Caldecott. I wonder where he got those sweets from and what the drug inside them was. He assured me that it would do them no permanent harm. By Jove, how soundly they sleep."

Half-an-hour passed away—half-an-hour fraught with a hundred anxious forebodings for Lucius Trevannion.

Supposing that the dose had been miscalculated,

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"Pursue him!" she screamed. "Pursue him! He's a murderer."

and that the two girls died. He would be a murderer then. He shook with fear as though he had a palsy. The train drawing up in a station brought him to himself again. He arranged the two helpless figures in opposite corners, as though each were asleep, and thrust his head out of the window. The station was Marple. There were not many people on the platform, and it was with a decided feeling of relief that Trevannion saw Caldecott's figure walking down the platform eagerly looking out for his confederate, as had been arranged between them. At sight of Trevannion, Caldecott hurried forward and leapt inside the compartment. In a few moments the train moved away out of the station.

Caldecott's eyes were fixed gloatingly on the two unconscious figures, the victims of his villainy.

"Then it's all gone off well," he said, speaking in a half whisper as though in fear lest the two unconscious figures could hear what he was saying, though there was really but little cause for apprehension of such a contingency. It was his guilty conscience that prompted this needless caution.

"Yes," answered the other, and proceeded to detail in full how easily his work had been accomplished.

Caldecott looked at his watch.

"When we get to Hathersage," he said, "I shall get out, as arranged, with Miss Harlow. I suppose you have the tickets as arranged."

"Yes," answered Trevannion, and felt in his pocket for the ticket, but it was not there. He felt through every pocket in turn without success.

"Confound it!" he said, "I've lost the blessed thing; and, what's worse, I've lost my own too. You know I was going to get out at Eccleshall and leave Miss Lovelace here with a ticket for Sheffield in her pocket. She's sure to be found by someone, and she won't in the least know where you and Miss Harlow are, and when she is found it will surely be too late for her to do anything."

"Yes, that's all right," answered the other roughly. "You can do what you like, but it's a nuisance your having lost those tickets. I wonder what on earth you can have done with them?"

"Well, there's no good crying over spilt milk," answered Trevannion; "and you must own I've risked a good deal for you?"

"Not entirely for me," was the somewhat sneering rejoinder. "You forget that you had a score against the fair Hazel, to say nothing of the fact that there's five hundred pounds waiting for you."

"Well, anyhow, we both of us have to see the business out," he said; "so I don't see what object can be gained by our trying to cut one another's throats."

Can you play "Hunt the Fiver"? See Photo Competition.

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CHAPTER III.

It was half-past ten. Eric Monteith, absolutely oblivious, of course, to what had happened to Hazel, set forth from his lodgings with the intention of escorting Hazel and Jenny to the station. He arrived at their rooms, and was electrified to hear that they had already gone.

"Gone!" he echoed, in amazement. "Where have they gone to?"

"A Mr. Trevannion—he called for them," the landlady answered. "It must have been some time after eight o'clock, and took them away to the station in a cab. They seemed in a mortal hurry."

For a few moments Eric could hardly believe the evidence of his ears own.

"Are you quite sure," he said to the woman, "that they have gone?"

"Quite," came the answer. "And there is rather a funny thing in connection with their going. I found these railway tickets lying at the foot of the stairs some time after they had left. I suppose they must have dropped them." And she handed the three diminutive pieces of pasteboard to the dumfounded Monteith.

They were three first-class tickets, but the astonishing part about them was that they were all for separate places. One was for Hathersage, another was for Eccleshall, and the third was for Sheffield. Here was a discovery that only made the matter more complex than ever.

But one fact stood out with startling distinctness. Trevannion had called for the two actresses and had induced them to drive away to the station with him pell-mell. The landlady was unable to say more. She had not overheard the conversation that had passed between Trevannion and his two dupes. She could only reiterate that they had all three driven off together, and that her bill was settled—sure index of the fact that her lodgers had taken their final departure.

Eric was like a man possessed. He dashed off to the station, where he found Venables and the rest of the company awaiting him, and at once told the manager what he knew.

Venables was no less mystified than he was.

"What on earth is the meaning of it?" he said; "and what on earth are we to do?"

"I know what I am going to do," said Eric. "I'm going to follow up the only clue we've got. I'm going to charter a special and I'm going to visit Hathersage, Eccleshall, and Sheffield in turn. I take it that those three tickets must have some connection with the business, though why, in the name of goodness, there should be three different destinations is more than I can fathom. It looks uncommonly like foul play."

"But what on earth should Trevannion want to decoy the girls away for," put in Venables; "and supposing that he dropped the tickets where the landlady found them merely as a blind. What will you do then?"

Eric shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know," he said, "but I am going to follow up the clue I have got. My advice is that you go on to Nottingham with the rest of the crowd and leave me here. Don't say a word of what has happened; explain the absence of Trevannion and the girls any way you can. I'm going to institute inquiries at the station here, and then I'm going to get that special train, no matter what it costs me."

And without more ado he hurried away on his self imposed task.

Inquiries at the station revealed but little. Manchester Central is a big station, and there were crowds of people always there that made the identification of individuals extremely difficult. The tickets, Eric discovered, had been bought at a railway office in the city. He chartered his special train with some difficulty, and then prepared to follow out the next part of his programme. Never had he felt the power of wealth more than he did at that moment. If he had been merely a poor, needy travelling actor it would have been impossible to have followed up the clues, that had been so miraculously delivered to him, with any speed. He would have had to toil laboriously by a slow train to Hathersage, to have instituted inquiries there, and then, if necessary, to have proceeded on towards Sheffield. Whereas, within an hour or so of his discovery he was seated in the saloon carriage of a train composed only of two coaches and the locomotive. In an hour, if all went well, he would be at Hathersage, and on the first stage of his quest.

The journey to the little town was perfectly uneventful. To Eric it seemed interminable, and when once or twice the train had to slow up in obedience to adverse signals, he could hardly contain his annoyance at the delay. But at last Hatherage was reached. He leapt out of the train and asked for the station-master. With the deference due to a gentleman who could afford to travel by a special, he was conducted to the station-master's private room, and at once plunged into the business that had brought him to the place.

"Can you tell me," he said, "whether a gentleman and two ladies have, by any chance, arrived here this morning? One of the ladies was an exceptionally tall and beautiful woman with red-gold hair. The other lady was a slight, dark person. The man who should have been with them would be about my own height and clean-shaven."

The station-master listened attentively.

"About the only passengers to Hathersage this morning, sir," he answered slowly, "were a gentleman and a lady—his wife—who had been taken with a sudden fainting fit in the train, and whom he had conveyed to the house of a doctor in the place. The lady was heavily veiled, but she was tall—I could see that, though she was carried out, and her hair was just the colour you describe."

An exclamation fell from Eric's lips.

"And the man," he said; "what was he like?"

"A tall, dark, handsome, gentleman, with a black moustache," came the answer.

"And he drove her away at once?"

"Yes, sir; he sent for a vehicle from the inn and drove her away through the village."

Eric's thoughts were racing along at lightning speed.

"Do you think I can find that flyman?" he asked quickly.

"Oh, yes, sir," came the somewhat mystified answer. "He's sure to be at the inn now."

"Then look here," went on Monteith rapidly, "I want you to do me a very great favour. I want you not to mention to a soul what I have asked you. In fact, keep your mouth shut entirely. I want this special train to be kept here, and I am going off to find this gentleman and his wife. Believe me, it is a matter of the utmost importance that secrecy should be kept. If I am successful in a certain business that has brought me here to-day, I shall not be ungrateful to you for your part in it."

The station-master readily gave his word, and Eric

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hurried away hot upon the scent. He had never expected so soon to be put upon the trail and with such little difficulty, yet there was a terrible feeling in his heart as he hurried away towards the village inn, for he knew by the station-master's meagre description who was the only man it could be who had carried off his helpless "wife." It must be Horace Caldecott, and his poor helpless "wife" must be Hazel herself.

So this was the explanation of Trevannion's action. What could have happened to Jenny? A wild wave of fury surged up in Eric's heart.

"I won't spare him this time," he muttered; "and if I can lay hands upon him it will be for good and all."

Inquiry at the inn was soon productive of the driver who had been coachman to the mysterious gentleman and his ailing wife that morning. Half-a crown had the effect of loosening his tongue. His story was brief and very much to the point. He had driven the pair to a house two miles or so beyond the village, occupied by a certain doctor named Ganderton. The lady had still been unconsicous, and they had had to carry her inside the house. That was all the man knew, but it was enough, and Eric did not wait for more. His next move was to rush off to the local police-station, there to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of the village constabulary. He had a brief but pithy conversation with the superintendent. Here, again, the power of gold was able to achieve what less poignant methods would have taken much longer to obtain. So ably did Monteith put forward the pressing claim that made aid necessary, that ere long he was in the satisfactory position of leaving the police-station in company with a pair of stalwart constables in plain clothes. He was going to leave nothing to chance now.

CHAPTER IV.

ALTHOUGH it was a source of annoyance to Lucius Trevannion that he had lost the three tickets in some mysterious way, yet he soon forgot the fact in the stress of the exciting episodes that culminated with the disappearance of Caldecott and Hazel at Hathersage. Had Trevannion paid for the tickets himself he would doubtless have felt their loss more poignantly; but Caldecott had supplied him with money, and hence he had no apprehension on that score. The plan that had been arranged between the two rascals was that Trevannion was to alight at Eccleshall, and to make the best of his way to London and to Caldecott's private house, leaving Jenny in the hands of Providence. By the time she would have recovered her senses and have extricated herself from the position in which she would find herself, Caldecott felt convinced that both he and Hazel would be out of reach; and, besides, the girl would never suspect that Hazel had been got out of the train at Hathersage. She would probably think she had come to Sheffield and been spirited away by Trevannion, as she could not know that Caldecott had had any part in the black affair.

So reasoned the astute Caldecott, and up to a certain point his reasonings were justifiable enough, but as the old saying has it, "The best laid plans of men and mice gang oft agley," and already an event had happened. The providential discovery of the railway tickets by Eric had been the direct means of putting him on the track of the abductor.

Just as the train was steaming out of Hathersage an elderly gentleman jumped into the carriage in which were Trevannion and the still unconscious Jenny. The girl lay in the corner as Trevannion had so artfully placed her, with the appearance of one in a deep sleep, an unnatural pallor overspreading her countenance. Annoyed as he was at this intrusion, Trevannion knew that his only course was to conceal any trace of chagrin that he might feel. It was not far to Eccleshall, and when he reached that station he could leap out of the train and get away before attention had been directed to the unconscious girl.

The gentleman looked somewhat curiously at the recumbent figure.

"The young lady looks tired," he said to the actor, pleasantly enough.

Trevannion threw a careless glance in Jenny's direction.

"Yes," he answered shortly; "she's been sleeping like that for a long time."

"Oh, then she's not travelling with you?" asked the other, in some surprise.

"Certainly not," came the prompt answer. And Trevannion, having made up his mind to his course of action, plunged deeper into the mire of falsehood. "I don't know her from Adam."

"I wonder if we ought to wake her up?" went on the officious stranger; "for all we know she may have overshot her station."

A growing alarm seized hold of Trevannion, a feeling that was intensified by the fact that the train had suddenly slowed up in response to an adverse signal. The only course for him to pursue was to temporise, for if the stranger should attempt to arouse the unconscious girl the results might prove exceedingly awkward, not to say precarious, for the success of the dark business.

"I wouldn't wake her," answered the actor quickly, trying to speak carelessly. "I expect she is bound for Sheffield, and will wake up like clockwork when she reaches her destination. Women are rather like that."

But the other did not seem at all satisfied.

"She doesn't look to me as if she were sleeping naturally," he pursued, in a puzzled voice.

At that moment the whistle of the engine gave vent to a piercing scream, and with sundry bumps and jolts the train started on its way again—a fact that caused Trevannion to breathe a heartfelt sigh of relief. But his satisfaction was short-lived. The jolting motion caused the inert body of the unconscious Jenny to lurch forward, and the next moment she would have fallen on the floor of the carriage had not the stranger sprung forward and caught her in his arms.

Now, had she been sleeping naturally, it stood to reason that she would have been awakened by the sudden shock, but as she still hung limp and resistless in his arms, the gentleman's suspicions were at once aroused as to her grave condition.

"She's not asleep," he said hoarsely, "she's unconscious!" And he laid her down carefully upon the cushions. Now the drug that had been administered to Jenny has different effects upon various constitutions. There are some upon whom it acts much more drastically than others, while some again are enabled to shake it off, after a comparatively short time. Now it so happened that the sudden shock on Jenny's deadened senses caused by the jolt that had displaced her had exactly the right effect in helping her to more quickly throw off the effects of the insidious drug. Added to this the elderly gentleman, with the best intentions in the world,

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had laid the girl somewhat roughly upon the seat, being unable to support the dead weight in his arms.

Lucius Trevannion sprang forward with a hoarse cry, and to his horrow saw the girl's eyelids slowly flutter back and reveal her eyes, still stupid from the effects of the narcotic. The stranger looked at him in amazement, and reading the terror in his face, raised the girl again to a sitting position, sitting beside her at a loss to know how to proceed further.

A shuddering cry came from Jenny's lips.

"Where am I?" she said weakly. "Are you there, Hazel?" Then her eyes sought Trevannion's guilt-stained countenance, and like a flash consciousness of what had happened came back to her.

"Ah, I remember," she said, her faculties suddenly leaping up to renewed alertness. "We got into the train with you, Mr. Trevannion, at Manchester. Hazel was with me then. Where is she now? What have you done with her? What has happened?" The questions came with frenzied quickness.

The train was moving along pretty swiftly now, and Trevannion realised from the pace they were going that some time must elapse before they reached a station. A mad terror seized hold of him. The stranger's eyes were fixed on his face with resentful curiosity. With a quick motion he turned towards the door of the carriage and tugged at the handle. But the other was too quick for him. Reading his intentions, he flung himself upon the actor, who fell to the ground, striking his head against the wood of the door as he did so, with the effect that, for the time being, consciousness was struck out of him.

Seeing that he was *hors de combat* for the present, the stranger turned to Jenny, who, faint and ill though she felt, was struggling hard to recall all that had happened since she had entered the train at Manchester.

"Quick!" cried the stranger. "Tell me all you can about this business."

"I am a member of a theatrical company," began Jenny, now almost on the verge of hysteria, "and we were due to-day to travel from Manchester to Nottingham. This morning this man, who is also a member of the company to which I belong, came to the rooms shared by a fellow-actress and myself, she being the beautiful Miss Hazel Harlow, of whom you have perhaps heard, and told us that our manager had mistaken the train, and that it was to start earlier than we had anticipated. He told us that his instructions were to drive us to the station and get us aboard the necessary train, irrespective of the other members of the company. Well, there seemed no reason to doubt his word. Before we had had time to realise what had happened, or to consider whether there was any irregularity in his conduct, we were in the train with him. He then produced a box of sweets and gave us each one. Those sweets were, I believe, drugged. Anyhow, I remember nothing more from the moment of eating one; and where my companion is I can't imagine. Oh, Hazel! Hazel!" she wailed, now breaking down completely and bursting into a flood of hysterical tears. "Where are you? Where are you?"

At that moment Trevannion began to show signs of returning consciousness. The blow on his head had been less violent than the stranger had imagined. Leaping to his feet, the actor flung himself upon the other man with the cry of a wild beast.

"I'll teach you to come interfering in affairs that don't concern you," he howled, and flung the other heavily down upon the floor of the compartment. The fracas had the effect of reawakening in Jenny the alertness of her deadened senses. Like a flash she sprung to the communication cord, and tugged at it with all her strength.

Struggle as he would, the old gentleman found himself no match for his younger assailant, reduced almost to a maniac by his mingled fear and rage. A terrible struggle ensued, but finally Trevannion got his knees in his opponent's chest, and, gripping him by the throat, set to work to try and throttle him into subjection.

The helpless man felt his senses leaving him. He gave a despairing gurgle, and Trevannion, springing to his feet, dashed at the door of the compartment just as the train began to slacken in response to Jenny's appeal.

Heads were thrust excitedly out of carriage windows. Already the guard had hurried out of his compartment and was walking along the train eagerly inquiring who had pulled the communication cord. Suddenly the door of the compartment, in which were the actors in the affray, was flung violently open and Trevannion, leaping out, fled away down the embankment that fringed the line like a hare. Then Jenny's pale face appeared at the open door.

"Pursue him!" she screamed. "Pursue him! He's a murderer!" for she really thought that Trevannion had succeeded in killing her benefactor. In a moment the guard had given chase, followed by two or three passengers, who joined the pursuit with all their sporting instincts aroused. The embankment was fringed with a low ledge at its base; over this Trevannion leapt, oblivious of the fact that along the top of the thorns ran a slender thread of barbed wire to keep people from straying on to the line. His foot caught in this and he fell heavily, and with such force as to knock the sense out of him for a few moments for the second time. This accident proved his undoing. A way was forced through the hedge and he was speedily captured and carried back to the guard's van.

And now that he saw the game was up, he relapsed into sullen silence that passed for indifference as regarded his fate, though in reality his whole being was consumed with fear.

A medical man, a passenger in the train, speedily ascertained that the elderly gentleman's injuries were not serious. His nerves had suffered more than his body.

In a few more moments the train was steaming into Eccleshall. The stranger's course was then plain sailing. He summoned a policeman and placed Trevannion in his charge for assault, at the same time offering to do all that he could to see Jenny out of her difficulties. He was, it appeared, a wealthy Sheffield merchant, and his word had weight. Trevannion was placed in custody and telegrams were sent all down the line to inquire if anything had been heard of Hazel Harlow, but, strangely enough, without success. A telegram was dispatched to Venables at Nottingham, and it was determined, on receipt of his answer corroborating the story that Jenny told, to send the actress thither, a pass being provided for her at the instigation of those in authority at Sheffield.

CHAPTER V.

MONDAY morning saw Venables, Jenny, and the other members of the company at the theatre at Nottingham, all in a high state of excitement, awaiting the arrival of Eric Monteith and Hazel Harlow—for Venables had received a telegram from Monteith to the effect that he

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would arrive at Nottingham as early as might be on Monday morning in company with Hazel. At ten o'clock a cab drew up outside the theatre, and from it emerged Eric and his charge safe and sound, though the latter showed on her face, as can be well imagined, traces of the terrible ordeal through which she had passed.

Eric's story was as follows: After telling them how he had arrived at Hathersage, and how he had been so providentially put on the track of the abductor, he went on:—

"We proceeded at once, I and the two constables, to the house to which I had good reason to believe Hazel had been carried. We found it to be a small, neat villa, set back in a garden opening on to the road by means of white entrance gates. We proceeded straight to the house where all seemed quiet. A manservant answered the bell, and I whipped out my revolver and told him that if he uttered a sound I would blow his brains out. Needless to say, he was paralysed with fear, and offered no resistance when one of the policemen slipped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists and trussed him up in a little room opening out of the hall. The village constable did his work most expeditiously and quietly, and apparently attracted no attention. Our next action was to reconnoitre and find out if we could whether there was anyone else in the house. The rooms on the ground-floor seemed deserted so we crept noiselessly up the stairs to be attracted by the sound of voices in a room at the back of the house. There we paused, and you can imagine my feelings when I heard the voice of the villain Caldecott speaking as follows:

"'I have the special marriage license here, and I am not going to let any chances slip this time. You will agree to marry me at once, or——' I didn't wait for more. We flung open the door and found ourselves in the presence of three people. One was Caldecott, the other a stranger, who, it turned out, was a rascally little doctor who lived in the house, the third was Hazel. Caldecott wheeled round with a savage cry, to find himself looking down the barrel of my revolver. The policemen sprang on the doctor and soon secured him. It was not such an easy job to get Caldecott trussed up. He struggled like a madman, and it was as much as the three of us could do to secure him. But we managed it at last, and he is at present lying in the cells at Hathersage waiting till we can have him brought up in court and publicly arraigned, and I think we've got enough against him now to insure a pretty long term of imprisonment, though if he were to have his deserts he ought to be strung up without further ado."

The feeling of relief that at last the scoundrel who had been the means of bringing so much misery upon Hazel and so many others was really in durance vile can be well imagined. Terrible though Hazel's last experience had been, she still, in common with Eric and Jenny,

"Caldecott wheeled round with a savage cry, to find himself looking down the barrel of my revolver."

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felt that the episode had been almost worth enduring with such an end in view. As Eric had said, enough proof was forthcoming to convict Caldecott a dozen times over. Now that he was really a prisoner he could be confronted with his crimes, and refutation would be impossible. More than that, Trevannion had turned King's evidence. With the faint hope of saving his own skin the craven wretch had confessed at Sheffield to complicity in the plot to abduct Hazel.

And yet, incredible though it may seem, Caldecott's time was not yet. Later on that same day Eric received a telegram from Hathersage from the police-superintendent there. This is what it said:

"Prisoner escaped this morning, no trace of his whereabouts."

Here was a blow indeed. An investigation of the dread message only made the news more black. It appeared that Caldecott had been conveyed away to the cells and safely locked up. He had been put in charge of a policeman, who had been enjoined on no account to have any further intercourse with him than was absolutely necessary. The true facts of the case, however, only came out later on, and were as follows:

The constable had been found lying apparently overpowered on the floor of the cell; the door was open, and the bird was flown. The constable's story was that he had been overpowered by a sudden attack from the prisoner. Being Sunday, the police-superintendent was away, and a subordinate was the only man in charge. This story seemed improbable on the face of it, and after strict investigation it turned out that the man had been bribed by a huge sum of money to submit to allowing it to appear that he had been assaulted, whereas in reality he had aided and abetted his prisoner to escape.

Needless to say, the man was dismissed from the police force with ignominy, though in view of what had happened this was but a poor substitute for the fact that Caldecott was again at liberty.

All that could be done Eric, aided by the police, did. Huge rewards were offered for the discovery of the escaped prisoner, and placards were circulated bearing his description. Spies were put upon his London house, and everything that could be done was, as has been said, set on foot. Yet the days passed by and nothing was heard of the ubiquitous scoundrel. The only poor consolation there was lay in the fact that from that time forward Horace Caldecott went about with a price upon his head. He could not dare to show himself among honest men, but must go about carefully like the hunted criminal that he was.

Trevannion was brought up and condemned to a period of imprisonment for his share in the matter, though, as was pointed out, he was in reality only a scapegoat for the greater villain who had escaped.

As for Caldecott, it really seemed as if the earth had opened and swallowed him up, but in his heart Eric knew that he had not yet heard of the last of the man who had caused him so much misery. He knew that Caldecott would bide his time, that he would never forget and never forgive Monteith for having run him to earth, and for having so nearly been the means of his absolute ruin.

And there was another fact in the case. Caldecott, criminal though he was, was at least sincere in the fact that he was ready to go to any extreme to win Hazel Harlow. He must know now that he had forfeited for ever—even had he not done so before—all hopes of claiming the girl as his wife; yet, if he had gone through so much, had resorted to such desperate expedients to gain her by fair means or by foul, would he pause even now, lost as he was to any hopes of calling Hazel his? And if he could not have her love, would he not lie in his place of concealment like a wounded snake waiting until he might raise himself and strike his poisoned fangs at the heart of her for whom he had bartered his very existence? Would he not also make one desperate effort to put Eric Monteith for ever out of his path? He had nothing to hope for now, and would surely be ready to go to any extreme to gain his one last desire—the desire for revenge.

Eric knew this well enough. He knew that from henceforward he would have to be continually on his guard; that there would be no more open warfare between himself and Caldecott. He knew that from henceforward he would have to go through life like a man who never knows from what quarter his enemy will strike at his existence. It was not fear he felt at the prospect, but a mad rage against the inscrutable workings of Providence. Why had Fate delivered the man into his hands only to snatch him away again just when victory seemed assured?

But he said nothing of this to Hazel. He would at least show her that he thought the danger was past, and one thing at least was certain. It would indeed have to be a desperate game for Caldecott; the sword of Damocles hung over his head ready to descend at the slightest provocation.

The week in Nottingham passed off uneventfully enough, a fact of unspeakable blessing to Hazel and Jenny

The *Good Samaritan* Company played to crowded houses every night, and the verdict that had been passed by other towns upon Hazel's abilities as an actress was fully indorsed by Nottingham.

The *Good Samaritan* Company were due at Edinburgh the week after their stay at Nottingham. Here Hazel was suddenly to be confronted with a terrible charge, that of theft—a charge substantiated by terribly conclusive circumstantial evidence. To see how the charge was pressed home upon her, and what the upshot of the affair was, we must refer our readers to the thrilling instalment in next week's *Short Stories*.

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Read "Dead to the World."

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"THAT young and talented actor, Horace Davenport," as the dramatic critics kindly described him, was seated, with more regard to ease than elegance, before a cheerful fire in his comfortable chambers.

His dark, good-looking face wore that sad, hopeless look that a liver derangement or blighted love alone can bring, and his was not a case for medical advice.

A pile of newspapers and reviews lay beside him. He had looked them all through for the purpose of reading one particular item—the critique of a novel by a new writer. It was with feelings of joy that he found the reviews uniformly favourable.

His interest in the matter is easily explained. One short year ago he was the happy *fiancé* of the charming authoress. A lovers' quarrel, a few hasty words, and the ring was returned, but not the heart which had been given with it.

Both suffered, but both were proud, and neither would take the first step towards reconciliation. They had not met since the engagement was broken off, and now he found himself longing to hear her voice again—to clasp her hand once more.

Suddenly an idea took possession of his brain. For an hour he sat still, staring into the fire, but with a new light in his eyes. Finally he sprang up.

"I'll do it!" he muttered, and then, flourishing the poker, dealt a large, smouldering lump of coal a mighty blow, scattering it into numberless blazing fragments. But the above exclamation in no way referred to this performance.

A week later, Clarice Luxmore, the new writer in whom Horace Davenport was so interested, was seated in the drawing-room of her charming home in Surrey.

An open book lay before her, but she was not reading. She was thinking of her success, and wondering whether "he" knew of it, and, if so, how he received the news. How she longed to share her triumph with him! But he had not even sent her a word of congratulation, and how could she possibly make any advances.

Then she thought, with some trepidation, of the journalist to whom she had promised an interview on behalf of the *Golden Magazine*. What was he like? What would he want to know, and what could she tell him that would be of sufficient interest to publish in an important journal? Now that she momentarily expected his arrival, the ordeal, in anticipation, was alarming.

By-and-bye the sound of wheels was heard outside, and a minute later Mr. Carslake was announced.

She noticed, as she rose to greet him in her own sweet and graceful way, that he was a tall, fair man, with hair slightly grey at the temples, and a well-trimmed moustache.

He began by thanking her effusively, in a clear and rather high-pitched voice, for her kindness in acceding to his request for an interview.

She murmured some polite commonplace, and he noticed that she seemed to have grown paler since he had entered the room—the result of nervousness, no doubt.

"What do you want me to tell you?" she smiled.

"Everything," he replied, producing a formidable-looking note-book. "In the first place, I should like to see the room in which you write."

Miss Luxmore smilingly complied, and led the way to her pretty boudoir. Here they settled in comfortable chairs, and began to take the interview in earnest.

Mr. Carslake had all the qualities of a successful, up-to-date journalist. His inquisitiveness was phenomenal, but displayed with such remarkable tact that it was absolutely impossible to take offence, even at his boldest ventures in the art of polite cross-examination. Indeed, his method of extracting information deserved a better title than that ordinary and—to some ears—vulgar term, questioning.

Step by step he elicited his victim's whole history from the bald and toothless age onward. But after a time he approached a subject which even he, incredible as it may appear, introduced with slight, but decided, symptoms of embarrassment.

Meanwhile, the colour had returned to Miss Luxmore's cheeks, and her eyes sparkled. Evidently, she found the interview a far more agreeable experience than she had expected. In fact she seemed to be enjoying it, and had, hitherto, told him all he wished to know readily and frankly.

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But now Carslake's wonderful tact seemed to fail him, and the next question was put with alarming directness, though rather disjointedly.

"Is the report that you are about to marry your neighbour, Mr. Milward, correct, Miss Luxmore?"

All the dimples left her face as she replied coldly:

"No; it is utterly without foundation."

"Pardon me for having asked the question," he said. "Of course, I shall mention nothing in my article without your permission. Would you like to have the report contradicted?"

"It is scarcely worth the trouble," she replied ndifferently. "I think you had better say nothing of my matrimonial intentions."

"Very well. But gossip is busy with your name, I assure you. Another rumour credits you with being engaged to an actor."

"That is equally false."

Her voice was colder than ever, but the colour in her face deepened.

"Will you excuse me for a moment?" she asked, suddenly rising. "I hear papa in the hall. He has come in."

She left the room, leaving the door slightly ajar.

Carslake heard a man's step, and then a subdued murmur of voices.

Presently she returned, followed by a fierce-looking little man, whom she introduced as her father.

"Pleased to meet you," cried Mr. Luxmore heartily. "You must stay and lunch with us."

"Thank you, I shall be delighted," replied Carslake.

"Have you finished putting my little girl through her paces?" asked Mr. Luxmore with a proud, fond look towards his daughter.

"Very nearly," replied Carslake. "Miss Luxmore is an excellent subject. I have interviewed several eminent people, but have never before found my task so agreeable. I have the greatest difficulty imaginable in getting sufficient information for an article from some of them."

"I can quite understand that," returned the gratified parent, smiling. "I'm very glad that I am not of sufficient importance to merit your professional attention."

At that moment a servant appeared with a message that Mr. Willis was in the drawing-room, and would like to see Miss Luxmore.

"Mr. Willis!" exclaimed Mr. Luxmore. "Show him up. The son of an old friend of mine," he explained to Carslake.

"Why, Dick, my boy, what lucky chance brings you down here?" he cried, grasping the hand of a fine, good-looking young fellow as the door opened again.

"My visit is to Clarice," the new-comer replied, disengaging his hand from Mr. Luxmore's grasp, and turning to greet Miss Luxmore. "I am commissioned by the editor of the *Golden Magazine* to interview her at an early opportunity."

"Ah, of course! You're in the scribbling line, too. But your colleague here has forestalled you."

"My colleague!" exclaimed Willis, looking sternly at Carslake. "This gentleman is not connected with our Magazine. I have not the pleasure of knowing him."

"What!" cried father and daughter in one voice.

"I repeat, I have not the pleasure of knowing him, and he is certainly not authorised to interview Miss Luxmore by our people."

Carslake was now looking anything but comfortable. In fact, it was very evident that, if the earth had suddenly opened and swallowed him, he would have regarded it as a personal favour.

"Then will you kindly explain this intrusion?" asked Mr. Luxmore, glaring at Carslake, and visibly bristling.

"I—er—I am extremely sorry to confess that I am not an accredited representative of the journal mentioned," Carslake acknowledged, painfully aware that Miss Luxmore was regarding him with unfavourable astonishment.

"Well!" demanded Mr. Luxmore, with strained calmness in his tones.

"I—I thought that if I could obtain an interview and write it up, the editor might accept it," he concluded lamely.

"But you used their official note-paper in making your application!"

"I got it through a friend at the office."

"Oh! you did, did you?" cried Mr. Luxmore, exploding with wrath. "And are you aware that your rascally conduct renders you liable to prosecution for entering this house under false pretences, you precious scoundrel?"

"I am not that, sir," returned Carslake with some spirit. "I admit that my action may appear dishonourable, but I am no scoundrel."

"*May* appear dishonourable!" echoed Mr. Luxmore. "By George!" he exclaimed violently, "I believe you are one of that gang of burglars that broke into my friend Saxby's house over at Crawford, the other night. No doubt you are reconnoitring to see whether it's worth while waiting on us on some future occasion. But you are trapped now, my friend. I'll send for a policeman."

"Oh, papa, you are making a charge against Mr. Carslake that he can easily refute, I am sure. Pray give him an opportunity of proving his respectability before resorting to such extreme measures," interrupted Miss Luxmore, whose sympathy seemed aroused by Carslake's evident consternation.

"My dear, kindly leave me to deal with this matter. You don't understand these people," said Mr. Luxmore testily. "Do respectable people act as he has?"

"If you will allow me to speak to you in private, Mr. Luxmore, I think I can satisfy your doubts on that score," said Carslake, still dejectedly.

To this Mr. Luxmore at first demurred, but, persuaded by his daughter, he at length grudgingly consented to the suspicious stranger's request.

He was leading the way to the library, Willis bringing up the rear, when Carslake suddenly paused.

"Will you take me to your dressing-room, Mr. Luxmore," he asked, "I can explain matters better there."

"My dressing-room!" gasped the old gentleman in amazement.

"Yes," replied Carslake quietly, "and I should like our interview to be a strictly private one. This gentleman," indicating Willis, "had better return to Miss Luxmore."

Willis glared at the speaker, whose cool impudence seemed literally to take his breath away.

"Hand him over to the police, and have done with him," he cried. "He's up to some trick."

"Pooh! I'm not afraid of him," said Mr. Luxmore,

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who evidently regarded this advice as a slur on his courage. "Come in here."

He opened a door as he spoke, and entered the room, followed by Carslake.

"You can go back to Clarice, Dick."

"I shall do nothing of the sort," cried Willis hotly. "If you are foolish enough to humour the impudent beggar by shutting me out, I shall, at least, remain within call; and I shall not hesitate to open the door at the first suspicious sound, I promise you."

He looked darkly at Carslake as he spoke.

"Have your own way, then," returned Mr. Luxmore, shutting the door on his young friend with unnecessary violence.

"And now what is the meaning of all this mystery?" he demanded, flinging himself into a chair and looking sternly at the culprit.

That worthy vouchsafed only a sigh in reply. He then silently divested himself of his coat, and busied himself for a few minutes at the washstand and dressing-table.

When he turned to face Mr. Luxmore once more, a transformation had taken place. Carslake the journalist had disappeared, and Horace Davenport the actor stood revealed.

The effect on Luxmore was remarkable, and, to Davenport, disconcerting. Flinging himself back in his chair, the old gentleman roared with laughter.

"Well, well!" he gasped, when he had regained sufficient breath to speak. "This is a surprise, Davenport. What on earth induced you to come here in that guise."

Davenport looked abashed.

"Mr. Luxmore," he said, "I will explain. You know in what relationship I formerly stood to your daughter. I have never ceased to regret that our engagement was broken, and I still love Clarice with all my heart. Not daring to call on her openly after what has passed between us, and yet longing to see her and speak to her once more, I took advantage of circumstances and professional arts. I have acted very foolishly. I sincerely apologise, and beg that you will now allow me to depart without disclosing my identity to anyone else."

"You and Clarice are a pair of stuck up young fools," cried Mr. Luxmore. "My silly little girl is breaking her heart for you, and you are doing the same for her, yet you are both too proud to acknowledge it—to each other at least. Dick!" he shouted. "Come here, lad. Clarice was right, by Jove!"

The door opened and Willis burst in.

"Mr. Davenport, I am delighted to meet you," he cried, wringing the actor's hand warmly. "You must forgive our little joke."

"Foiled with his own weapons! Beaten at his own game!" laughed Mr. Luxmore.

"I don't understand," said Davenport, in amazement. "Do you mean to say you penetrated my disguise?"

"Miss Luxmore did," smiled Willis, "past master as you are in the art of making-up."

"Dick came in with me," explained Mr. Luxmore. "Then Clarice rushed down to the hall, and told us you were upstairs masquerading as a journalist. She knows you are not connected with any Magazine—neither is Dick, by-the-way, but that is of no consequence. She quickly taught us the parts we were to play in the little comedy that followed, and—'pon my word—I consider our acting has been as good as some you'll see in your own theatre—though I say it myself."

Davenport was looking alarmed.

"You completely hoodwinked me at all events," he said.

"Now come along and congratulate the authoress and heroine of the piece," said Mr. Luxmore, taking Davenport's arm.

"Really, I——"

"Nonsense! I'll not hear a word. She's expecting you. Bring her down to lunch. Dick and I will go on. Don't keep us waiting too long."

Left to himself, Davenport boldly turned the handle of the door and entered. The next moment Clarice was in his arms.

"My clever darling!" he cried. "How did you find me out? I thought my disguise was complete."

"'Love is blind' is not true in every sense, dear," she replied softly. "Besides, you have forgotten to remove from your watch-guard that little golden heart I gave you long ago."

"Precious little trinket," he said, touching it reverently. "Fitting type of the heart of her who gave it. And so," he continued lightly, "not content with writing a successful novel, you must needs try your hand at play-writing. I must persuade you to write one for me."

She gave his arm a loving squeeze, as she replied:

"I will, with pleasure. But you must not undertake the part of the cruel deceiver in that, you know. That's not your line."

L. B. Brock.

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A new series of articles under this heading has just started in PEARSON'S WEEKLY. They are written under very romantic circumstances. The authoress, Miss Madge Morris, is a young lady who has resolved to make enough money by her pen to enable her to marry the man she loves.

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A VERY NATURAL MISTAKE.

Miss Deborah Markham stood at her kitchen sink one morning washing a bottle. It was one that had held an acid preparation for removing fruit stains. Almost any other woman would have thrown it on the ash pile as soon as it was emptied, but to Miss Deborah the natural thing was to clean it and store it away on a shelf in her cupboard with an army of other bottles.

No article ever seemed to Miss Markham to have outlived its usefulness; there was always a possibility that "it might come in handy some time," and it was treasured for the expected need.

People might by turns feel amused and exasperated by Miss Deborah's exaggerated love of economy, but their comments on her always ended with, "After all, she's dreadfully good-hearted, there's nobody in the whole town more ready to lend a hand than Deborah Markham, and if she takes any comfort in being so saving that's her own affair. She can afford to be overparticular." For she had the finest house and the largest income in East Elmore.

"It would be a pity not to keep this bottle," she commented, holding it against the light, "it's such a convenient size and the glass is so clear. I wonder what sort of glue that label was stuck on with; after all the hot water it's been in it hasn't started a mite. I've a good mind not to scrape it off, but keep the bottle just as it is. Like as not I shall want a bottle sometime for holding poison, and this one will be all labelled and ready."

Not long afterwards Miss Deborah decided that she must have the advice of the village doctor. All summer she had been tormented by nervous headaches and sleepless nights. She had doctored herself and had tried one kind of diet after another without relief, and her one servant, an old woman who had been kitchen-maid in the house since the days when Miss Deborah had been little Debby Markham, had experimented upon her mistress with all the potent mixtures she knew how to compound, but she, too, had failed to work a cure.

Accordingly, Doctor Bascom was summoned. The result of this professional visit was a slip of paper that Miss Deborah twisted between her fingers as she watched the doctor climb into his high trap before her gate. She noticed that Mrs. Prescott also was watching from her window, where she sat sewing, and the shutters in one window of Mrs. Treadway's vaultlike parlour were rolled open, a sure indication that the lady herself was sitting behind them.

"The neighbours will be running in to see what is the matter over here, so I shall have to send Hannah to the chemist's for the medicine," thought Miss Deborah, realising that for a few hours she was to be the most interesting person in the village. Her prediction was a true one. Within half-an-hour both Mrs. Treadway and Mrs. Prescott were established in comfortable chairs in her sitting-room making anxious inquiries about her health and going over the last bits of neighbourhood gossip. Other ladies followed them, for the doctor's trap stopping before the house had advertised to everyone the fact that either Miss Deborah or Hannah was ill, and the last callers did not leave until Hannah's clatter over the tea-table informed them that the old woman considered it time they were well out of the way and her mistress at supper.

It was after sunset when she found herself at liberty to prepare the medicine for use. Dr. Bascom had informed her that it was a preparation of bromide which would come in the form of a white powder and would require solution. "To be dissolved in eight ounces of water," she read on the slip of instructions.

"Then the first thing I want is an eight-ounce bottle," she thought, "and that ought to be very easy to find in the cellar cupboard."

The twilight was almost darkness in the cellar, but she did not take a light, and her hands groped about among the bottles in search of one that the sense of touch should tell her was of the required size. In the very front row she came upon one that she judged would answer the purpose. The kitchen was very dimly lighted by its north windows, but Miss Deborah did not stop to light a lamp before sifting the powder through a little funnel into the bottle and filling it with cold water. Not until she was ready to take the first dose of the new remedy did she discover that there was a small white label pasted across one side of the bottle—a skull above two crossbones and the word "Poison" ornamented the label.

It was a startling occurrence, but her sense of humour came to the rescue. "I've no doubt it fits well enough," she remarked grimly. "Most drugs are poison. I shall have to show Dr. Bascom the name I have given to what he calls 'a harmless remedy.'"

She found the "poison" so efficacious that a week later, when Hannah came down in the morning with white face and dull eyes, complaining of a sick headache, her first thought was of the medicine that had helped her own headache.

"Go and lie down on the sitting-room lounge," she commanded. "I'll give you a spoonful of bromide, and you needn't give a thought to the breakfast, for I'll see to that myself."

Hannah gladly allowed herself to be tucked up on the big lounge that was, in fact, a couch, and she swallowed the medicine obediently, then lay waiting impatiently for the pain to abate, but the headache was not to be routed so easily. When Miss Deborah peeped in through the kitchen door after she had finished her breakfast, expecting to see the old woman asleep, she saw instead Hannah's wide-open eyes gazing at her from a confused pile of pillows and shawls.

"One dose doesn't appear to be enough; you must take another," was her decision; "and if you don't feel much better in an hour I shall give you a third spoonful." When Miss Deborah returned to the kitchen, she found a barefooted boy standing on the doorstep. The severe expression on his freckled face showed that he considered his errand one of importance, and the weight of responsibility upon him gave great gravity to his voice as he said, "Good morning, Miss Markham."

"Why, Joseph, what's the matter?" she exclaimed. "Is your mother ill? Has anything happened to my dress?" For the boy's mother was the village dressmaker, and she had a new black silk for Miss Deborah under way in her workroom.

"No'm, mother isn't ill, but my sister Julia is, and mother's going to Sharon to see her. She's going to start before dinner, and she says please to come down

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right away and have your dress fitted, so she can take it with her to work on, 'cause she may be gone three or four days."

This was a message to be obeyed at once. Miss Deborah hastened to change her wrapper for a more suitable dress for the street and then looked into the sitting-room to see how Hannah was feeling.

"Mrs. Pratt has sent for me," she said. "She's going out of town this morning and wants to fit my dress before she goes. I shan't be away long, and you must lie still till I come back. If anybody comes to the house, let them rap till they give it up. You are not to stir. Your headache isn't much better yet, is it? But it's too soon to give you any more medicine. I'll leave the bottle and spoon here on the stand at the head of the lounge, and you can see the clock without moving. When it's nine o'clock, take another spoonful unless you get rid of the pain before then."

By this time Hannah's opinion of her mistress' much lauded medicine was not a flattering one.

"Nothing in the world but salt and water!" she grumbled, rolling her head restlessly on the pillow in search of a cool spot. "I fancy I'm not the sort of person to work faith cures on."

But at nine o'clock she decided to give the drug one more trial. She sat up on the edge of the lounge and reached for the bottle. The motion made her head whirl, and she sat with closed eyes for a minute to steady herself before trying to pour out the liquid. When she ventured to open her eyes she noticed at once the white label on the bottle.

"That tells how much to take, I suppose," she muttered. "I don't believe Miss Deborah gave me half enough for a dose." And she brought the bit of paper close to her eyes to read for herself the directions. The next instant she was standing in the middle of the room, the bottle on the floor and her headache entirely forgotten.

"Poison!" she gasped. "No wonder I felt worse and worse all the time!"

She ran to the window which looked into Mrs. Prescott's yard and called wildly: "Help! Help!" And when a startled face appeared at an opposite window added: "Send for the doctor! I'm poisoned!"

Mrs. Pratt lived at the far end of the village, ten minutes' walk from the Markham house. Miss Deborah lost no time on the way, and the business was transacted without delay. Both women were anxious to get it done that they might be free for other matters. Mrs. Pratt had a long ride before her, and Miss Deborah did not like to leave Hannah alone longer than was necessary.

After she left the dressmaker she stepped briskly along the street on her way home. There was no one in sight except a man scurrying along far in front of her. He disappeared through some gateway not far from her own, but the shrubs leaning over dooryard fences and the flicker of lights and shadows on the narrow footpath obscured the view and deceived the vision so that she could not be sure which house had been his destination.

"I wonder if that was Ezra Greene. Maybe Mrs. Greene is having one of her bad spells and has sent for Mrs. Prescott. If I wasn't in such a hurry, I'd stop and see," she thought as she passed the Greene house. There was no sign of excitement about the place, however, and she had no time for further speculations on Ezra Greene's reasons for haste, for she saw the doctor's trap turn into the main street from one of the crossroads leading out into the farming districts. Doctor Bascom was on his way home, but in answer to a call from behind him he stopped his horse and turned about on the seat of his trap to listen to the shouted summons. Then he backed his horse round and drove up to the side of the road, where a man came out to take charge of the horse, while he himself vanished as Ezra Greene had done.

"There's trouble at the Prescotts'," thought Miss Deborah, and she began to run, but she stopped short when she came in sight of the Prescott house and her own, for her neighbour's premises were deserted, while in her own garden several men were gathered about the door talking earnestly, and it was in front of her own door that the doctor's horse was tied.

Her pause of astonishment was a brief one. Then she dashed into the garden, through the group of men and into the kitchen. A woman was stirring something over the fire, and a hum of voices came from the sitting-room. Miss Deborah did not stop to question the occupant of the kitchen, who was so interested in the contents of her stewpan that she did not notice Miss Markham's entrance.

Mrs. Prescott was standing over the lounge, with an empty bowl in her hands.

"There, if it was an acid you've been taking there's a chance that the soapsuds will save you," she announced cheerfully, "and the sweet oil ought to help you whatever the stuff was. Don't you feel any better yet, Hannah?"

A feeble groan was the only reply. Dr. Bascom was at the window examining the contents of a bottle. Suddenly the look of perplexity on his face changed to a broad smile. Looking up, he saw Miss Deborah in the kitchen door.

"This tastes like the bromide I prescribed for you a few days ago, Deborah. How did you happen to ticket it this way? You've frightened Hannah out of a year's growth, and furnished the whole neighbourhood with a most welcome excitement."

"Oh, Miss Deborah, it was all a mistake, wasn't it?" cried Hannah, catching sight of her mistress above the ring of the frightened and bewildered faces surrounding her. "You didn't try to poison me on purpose, did you?"

Miss Deborah looked about her with sparkling eyes. The doctor's words had explained the situation to her.

"Mistake!" she exclaimed scornfully. "Have you all lost your wits? Do you think I shall have to poison you when I want to get rid of you, Hannah? I've a good mind to set you packing this instant, but nothing short of a lunatic asylum would take you in, I'm afraid. If your morning's work isn't further along than mine, ladies, perhaps you had better go where you can attend to it!" And she turned and walked out into the back regions of the house, shutting several doors sharply behind her.

Dr. Bascom watched her retreat with liveliest enjoyment; the stern-faced old man could enjoy a good joke heartily. Then he turned to the astonished group in the sitting-room.

"I think, Hannah, that if you have swallowed everything these impromptu physicians have been ordering you may consider yourself thoroughly poisoned, and now, neighbours, shall we leave her to make her peace with Deborah?"

E. A. M.

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A Life for a Life.

"So you are determined, then, to marry this man?"

"Yes; I am determined to marry this man."

"For the last time, Kathie! Will you not think it over—reconsider your decision? Once done, it can never be undone—remember that!"

"Who are you, Philip Rayne, that you should dictate my course to me? Is it because *my* father owes *yours* money? Is it because he—you—all of you Raynes! seek to humble me—in my own eyes, and in the eyes of all who care for me?"

"No, Kathie! it is not that; it is because I love you so, that I would warn you—hold you back, snatch you, if I may, from a danger which you cannot realise!"

"Thanks! It is of course good of you; but I prefer—much prefer—to manage my own affairs. It will be quite time enough for you to offer your advice, sir, when I seek it. As that is a very remote eventuality, we will, if you please, consider the subject, as between us, indefinitely closed."

Kate, better known as Kathie Myddleton, and Philip Rayne were old friends. Kathie's father was one of the unhappy class, who never, by any chance, succeed in anything. Their touch is blight; their lives resultless.

Predestined, it would seem, to social failure, they appear to have a strangely keen relish for assisting in the fulfilling of prophecy.

Captain Myddleton, a widower, with but one child, considered himself, in view of that fact, free to pursue, with reckless light-hearted buoyancy, "the primrose-way" so long as his inheritance lasted, and then for a few steps further in the company of the money-lender and his following.

Unfortunately, his daughter Kathie, a girl of exceptionally high spirit and, it must be confessed, of a wayward temperament, had to suffer in the process. Motherless from her birth almost, and, by consequence, thrown early upon the tender mercies of servants and questionable friends, her waywardness at twenty-three inclined perilously towards dangerous, because irresponsible independence; while her original high-spirits were becoming, day after day, like, and yet more like, to that hard, unsympathetic type of nature, whose god is itself.

Philip Rayne, on the other hand, was a handsome, stalwart young fellow who, without being in any sense a "prig," was all that the heart of the most exacting of good and true women could possibly desire.

The son of a rich man, wealth, while he thoroughly enjoyed all that it could give, had not in the least spoilt him. A gentleman (in the true meaning of the word) to the finger-tips, he was manly, and yet tender as a woman—especially to women. From a boy he had worshipped the very ground upon which Kathie stood. That love is always blind, I cannot, and do not, believe; but in this case there was a dimness of vision on the part of love which made the man to be more than a little kind to the woman's faults and failings.

Philip's father had at one time lent Captain Myddleton money; why, it is hard to say, for the ex-guardsman had little or no security to offer beyond his "I.O.U." which, saving the revenue stamp, was scarce worth the paper upon which it was written.

Strange to say, Joshua Rayne, old as the debt now was, had never pressed for payment, or shown the slightest sign of making things unpleasant for his dilatory debtor. This, naturally, suited Captain Myddleton's book to a nicety, for he himself might be fairly trusted not to allude to the subject in any way.

Philip knew of the transaction, and regretted it, insomuch as he looked upon it in the light of a barrier between himself and Kathie.

Still, even he could not quite fathom his father's action, or rather want of action in the matter.

He had always known old Joshua as being so close-fisted and hard in everything relating to money that it puzzled him as to what motive his father could reasonably have for this refraining from reclaiming his own.

Things were in this state when Leon Duvernay was, one summer afternoon, introduced to Kathie at a tennis-party on the Myddletons' own lawn at Richmond.

Nobody knew very much about him—this elegant, soft-speaking Frenchman; not even the voluble lady who was, in a way, responsible for him; but as he was faultlessly dressed, of charming, if somewhat super-charming manners; and paid the daintiest of compliments in the most picturesque of broken English, people—and among them Kathie—were disposed to accept Leon Duvernay, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, Count of the Holy Roman Empire, and Heaven knows what beside, at practically his own estimate, and as a decided acquisition to Richmond society.

He was a tall, dark man, with eyes which some might call "shifty," but which the majority of the women termed "divine."

It is not an unwise rule to mistrust the man whose eyes are thus breathed "divine" by the sex, whose

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experience should by this time have taught them to know better.

Duvernay was no exception. From the very first the Frenchman displayed an unmistakable admiration for the Captain's beautiful daughter. Like one of his own poodles, he followed her everywhere. For a long time Kathie resented this, to her, unwelcome attention, and any ordinary Englishman would have at once noticed, and profited by the girl's evident dislike and prejudice.

For awhile Philip Rayne looked exultantly on. Then came trouble.

One day it was observed by Kathie's intimates that Duvernay assumed towards her an altogether new and suggestive air of proprietorship; and it was not long before it was generally known that the pair were engaged.

Soon rumours of an early marriage were heard, and it was in connection with one such that Philip uttered his remonstrance.

"Don't think me ungenerous," he said to her, a few days after the conversation between them which opens this story. "I know you have forbidden me to say anything to you on the subject, but I cannot—Kathie! I cannot hold my peace! You may, perhaps, never speak to me again; yet, though it would go nigh to break my heart, I must repeat my warning, even at the risk of complete silence 'twixt you and me for ever. This man—this Leon Duvernay—Kathie, has not the power, believe me, to effect a perfect marriage with you. French law does not allow it, and he knows that. To make it legal in France, Duvernay's parents should give consent; and, as you know, not one of his friends has made a sign. So long as you remain in England your marriage will hold good—here; but once on French soil, and the fellow has you at his mercy."

Kathie's hard and stubborn nature (only skin-deep, after all), however, nearly surrendered before the earnest pleadings of Philip. They moved her powerfully; but, although she instinctively felt that he was right, she would not acknowledge it, or turn from her purpose.

"You may think it right," she said, with a poor attempt at scornful sarcasm, "to traduce another in his absence, and to the woman whom he is to marry, but I hold it to be mean, despicable, and unmanly!"

"Well," he said gently and sorrowfully, "you cannot help my always loving you. Since you will have it so, I will say no more. Good-night!—Kathie."

"Good-night, Phil!"

She reached out both her hands as if to tell him that she believed him, and despised herself, but it was an impulse only, and she repented before it became an irrevocable act.

"Good-night!"

The *frou-frou* of her dress as she passed hurriedly out through the open window into the starlit garden, was to him as a sound of ill-omen, which rung in his ears all through the days, until he heard it once again.

Then, a week later, the marriage—all *de rigueur*—not a hitch anywhere. Bride lovely, but anxious-looking, and pale, bridegroom spic and span, smiling eternally, but yet manifestly subtly conscious of the whole thing's unreality.

Philip was there; he would be true to his resolve to watch and wait.

Ever since the arrival of the Frenchman the young man had been haunted by an indefinable memory, which, rack his brain as he might, would not crystallise.

He felt morally certain that somewhere—where he could not for the life of him remember—he had seen Leon Duvernay in other surroundings, and in very different guise. It worried him to be unable to recall the truth.

The day was warm, and Philip, from his post behind a pillar in one of the side aisles of the church, saw that, every now and again Duvernay wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

Once, when he did so, and when a beam of sunlight shot right across his face, he pushed the hair well up from his brow.

Then light came to Philip Rayne.

"That scar on the temple! It is Carnier Leon! the man I saw two years ago on trial in Paris for the murder of his wife, and he was acquitted on a point of law!"

He would have rushed up to the altar and stayed the marriage, but as he made a move the last words were spoken, and the strains of the "Lohengrin" pealed out as the gay crowd followed the principals into the vestry.

* * * * *

It was a hard winter in Paris; so hard, that the snow through which driftways had been cut in every thoroughfare, was frozen in heaps to adamantine point.

Everything was dear (food, that is), and distress and misery stalked hand-in-hand through the poorer parts of the city, leaving behind a terrible trail of desolation and death.

The Rue des Etoiles is a small dark street in the Montmartre quarter. The houses in it are of the dreary Clerkenwell, or Pentonville, type, only flush with the pavement. The street bristles with low-class *cabarets*, and with shops whose wares are neither appetising nor in great quantity.

One house there was which, dirtier, and more squalid than the rest, leant forward out of the perpendicular to such an extent that it seemed a mere push from the rear of it would project it into the street.

The windows were filthy, and here and there stuffed with straw or rags. In the front room on the third floor a woman sat. There was no fire, and she looked, not alone pinched and pale with hunger, but cold-starved.

For just a week she had been tenant of this room, and now she is at the end of her resources. On the apology for a table a letter lies open. This she picks up after awhile, with a gesture of disgust, and reads:

It is in French, and translated, runs—

"My ever-loved and loving wife—Finding on my return from Marseilles that you had separated yourself from my establishment, I think it well to let you know that the arrangement suits me perfectly. As I do not intend contributing to your present domestic expenses, I should advise that you return to your English friends, who, doubtless, will be charmed to receive you. For me—well—I shall marry by-and-by; while you, in England, will have the honour of being still the wife of your most devoted—LEON DUVERNAY."

"Fiend! Fiend! Oh, Phil! Phil! if I had but listened to you!"

Yes, it is Kathie! After less than a year of such misery as she would have once thought it impossible for her to have endured.

Reason out her position she could not; she was only feeling out, in broken-hearted fashion, for some comforting voice and hand.

Then she thought she would go out.

Feverishly putting on her hat, and wrapping herself

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round with a big, warm cloak (almost her sole possession of any value), she descended the rickety stairs and passed out into the frost-bound street.

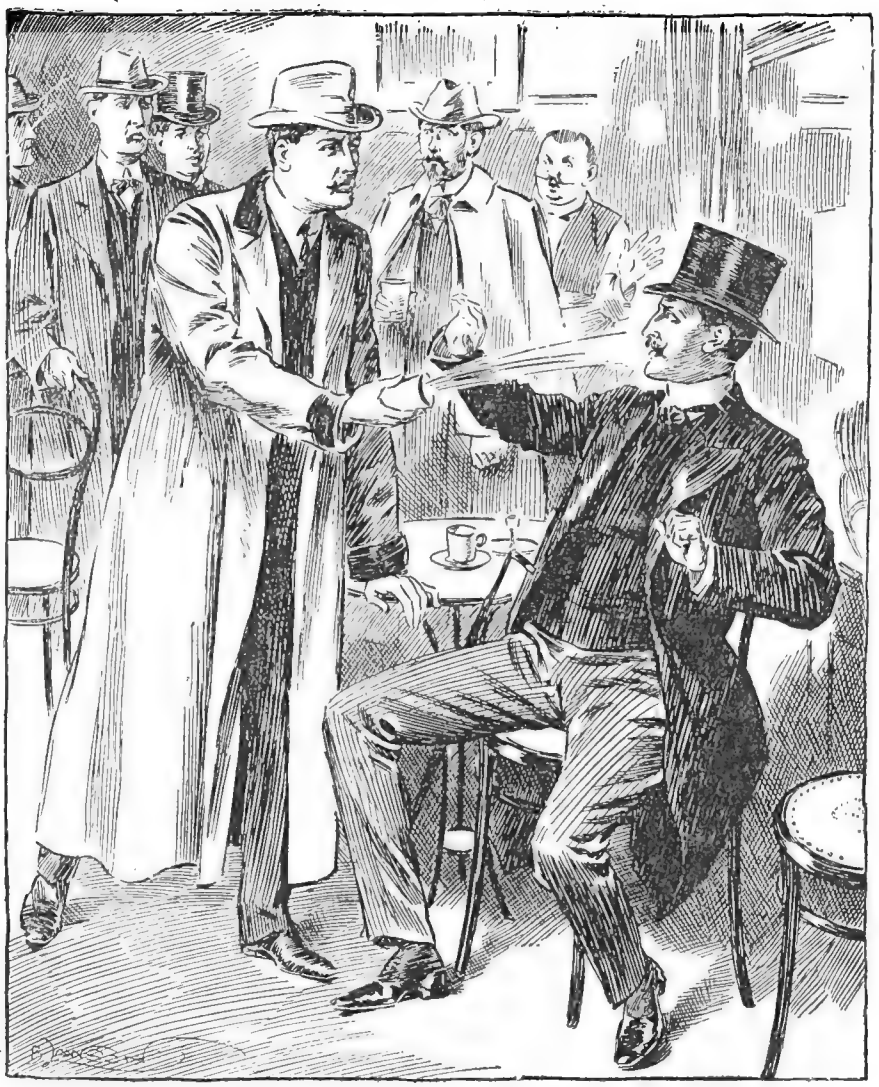
The story of her life since her marriage is both sad and short.

Duvernay had been deceived (not by Kathie) as to his English wife's means. He thought her to be rich, and when he discovered that her father was an impecunious, if not a bankrupt ex-soldier, he fairly exploded with rage.

From that moment he did his best, or worst, to make her life a burden. He taunted her with the fact of the illegality of her marriage—from a French point of view—and when she retaliated with all the spirit that was left in her—he struck her.

Ashamed to communicate the true state of things to her father, or even Philip; unable to move because kept without funds by Duvernay, she only waited the opportunity to leave him.

At last it came. Duvernay had a summons from Marseilles on pressing business. The rest we know. He was cunning enough to leave no money within reach, and her ornaments he had removed and disposed of long before. She, therefore, went out into the world of Paris—penniless (save for a dozen francs or so), and without a friend to consult with or help her.



He dashed the contents of his glass full in the Frenchman's face.

On through the white and bitter streets she went now; this letter of Duvernay's burnt into her brain.

By-and-by, after hours of wandering, she found that her steps had led her to the Seine, by the bridge of Lena.

Chilled to the bone, and ready to drop almost with fatigue and want of food, she halted by the bridge parapet, and leant against it for a moment's support.

A faint echo of footsteps on the hard ground told her of the approach of someone from the other side of the river, across the bridge.

Then a hand was laid upon her arm.

"You seem ill, madame? Can I help you in any way?"

Speak she could not, though she knew that it was Phil!—dear old Phil! honest-hearted, faithful Phil!

And he? Her face was so hidden by the enveloping cloak she was wearing, that he could not for the moment see her face. But for her weakness he would simply have pitied, and passed on.

A little cry, a half-reel, and his arm was round her to prevent her from falling. The movement disarranged the cloak, and he looked down into Kathie's face in bewildered wonderment.

It did not take many minutes to summon a passing policeman, who, for once, sympathetic (thanks, perhaps, to a good tip), procured a belated *fiacre*, into which the two men carefully assisted Kathie.

Telling the man to drive in the direction of his hotel, Philip Rayne did everything he could think of to rouse

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Kathie from the lethargic prostration into which she had fallen. The jolting of the vehicle aided him in his efforts; and presently she woke to life and to recollection.

"Phil! don't, don't leave me!" she implored him, taking his hand and shedding hot tears over it.

"No, dear! of course I will not! But tell me, where shall I take you? You must have immediate warmth and food, and——"

Then she told him all; how, save for her wretched shelter in the Rue des Etoiles, she was homeless, starving, penniless! She told him of Duvernay's cruelty; of her determination to leave him for ever; of her few months' life of misery, deceit, and agony of mind.

Philip hesitated no longer. He soothed her tenderly, and as might have a knight of old, his liege lady in distress.

He knew of good friends out Auteuil way. Bidding the cabman drive thither, he hurriedly explained matters—the simple-hearted French folk, giving of their best, and receiving Kathie as a trust from their good M'sieu Philippe.

"I will see you to-morrow," were his last words to her. "Meanwhile, get rest and peace; for you shall have no more sorrow, dear, so long as I shall live to shield you from it."

* * * * *

There is a certain Parisian Cafe, not far from the Palais Royale, much affected by English people of Bohemian tendencies. It is not large, it is not artistic particularly—it is just comfortable.

As a rule, the average citizen gives it a wide berth; the company does not suit him. There is too much "insular insolence," he says, and he stays away to prevent possible mischief.

This being so, the presence in the somewhat dingy place on the morning following the night of Kathie's discovery by Philip Rayne, of a tall, well-dressed Frenchman, was noticeable to habitual frequenters.

He had been there before, at long intervals, but none knew either his name or his business. He sat down at a table near the door, and ordered a cup of black coffee, and a *petit verre*.

There were about a dozen young men present—all, or nearly all, of them art-students. To them, five minutes after the Frenchman's entrance, was added Philip Rayne, who appeared to know everybody.

"Phil, my boy," said one, "you look transformed! What's happened to you?"

"To me? Nothing, Ernie, that I know of, except—well, that's my business."

"Oh, all right, Mr. Hush-'em-up. Keep your secret! There! never mind, Rayne—the secret is yours; the day is ours! Fill up and drink to——"

"Justice!" said Philip gravely, lifting his glass to drink.

He was within touch almost of the stranger, who watched him curiously.

As he put his glass to his lips in pledge of the toast, Philip's eyes met full those of the tall Frenchman.

What followed is talked about at "Epinays" to this day.

Springing forward, the young man looked at the other for a brief second steadily, silently, then hoarsely uttering the one word "scoundrel!" he dashed the contents of his glass fair in the Frenchman's face.

"Carnier Leon!" he cried, whipping out each word with a cracking snap, like to that made by a hunting crop in a strong man's hand. "I want no parley with you! I just want justice! You understand me!"

"You! *Peste!* why you are the puppy-boy! and you insult me?"

"Yes; if you will have it so."

"Oh! I want not to speak with you, but—I will fight you!"

"Messieurs! messieurs!" interrupted the anxious-eyed, fat little proprietor. "Do not, I pray you, make the quarrel 'ere!"

Philip reached out his hand and gently put the worthy *restaurateur* on one side.

Then, tearing out of his pocket a card, he scribbled upon it.

"I am going to kill you! Send to me your friend for a meeting to-morrow."

Duvernay, or Carnier Leon, smiled ever so sweetly.

"I will oblige you, *mon cher!*" was all he said, as, re-assuming his hat, he bowed to those around, and went out.

* * * * *

Early in the evening of the same day a gentleman of urbane manners, called at the Hotel Napoleon to see "Monsieur Rayne."

A brief five minutes was sufficient in which to arrange for a meeting the next morning in the wood behind the Bois.

Philip's friend, who was with him at the interview, first did his duty by seeking to persuade the other to change his purpose, and then, when he saw that to be impossible, gave his mind to the matter in hand.

Duvernay's friend was politely amenable, and a quarter of an hour after daybreak on the morrow the thing was to be.

"Will you ride with me as far as Auteuil?" asked Philip of his companion. "I want to call upon a lady there."

"Certainly! come along! You haven't much time to lose if you are to be up at three o'clock!"

* * * * *

When Philip Rayne left the Dufosse's house at Auteuil, without seeing Kathie, who was sleeping, he in no wise regretted his determination to kill the man who had wrecked his love's life, and, but for a strange circumstance, would have assuredly carried out his purpose.

He had made his will since the morning, leaving all he was possessed of to the one woman whom he loved.

Bidding "good-night" to his friend at the corner of the Rue de Rivoli, with a promise to meet him at four, he made for his hotel.

Something prompted him to put his hand in his outer side pocket—the document was gone! It was not that it was in itself valuable; it was that it might lead to suspicion, and, maybe, to a thwarting of his revenge. Where could he have dropped it? For dropped it he must have.

A further surprise awaited him at his hotel.

"Lady to see you, sir," said the English porter.

"Lady to see me! Who is it?"

"Don't know, sir. She's—here she is, sir, coming out of the manageress' room."

"Phil! Come upstairs—to your sitting-room. I must see you—must!"

"What is it?" said Philip, unable to speak almost from sheer amazement. "Tell me, dear, what has induced you to follow me here. You were asleep only an hour or so ago."

Read "Dead to the World."

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"No. I was on my way here with *this*, which you evidently sent me in mistake for a letter this morning."

It was his will.

She pleaded with him; for her sake not to do anything which should jeopardise his life. She did not know, till he told her, of Duvernay's imminent meeting with himself.

"You must not! You shall not fight him! With sword, too! why, Phil, he is the best swordsman in all France!"

"Kathie! I am not by nature a blood-thirsty man, but Leon Duvernay—Carnier Leon, as I know him to be—is too base to live, and it is I who must kill him!"

For a moment she did not speak—a wild scheme was forming itself in her brain.

She was, herself, an old pupil of Macpherson's—could use foil and rapier as well or even better than any woman in England. Yes, she would try it.

There is nothing a woman—a true woman—will not do to shield her love, or to avenge reproach.

He told her everything; the meeting at four with his friend, and—what might be.

He thought her sudden calmness strange and incomprehensible, but attributed it to an overwrought mind.

"Phil! I will go now. Tell them to get me a cab."

"Wait here a moment, then."

The door closed, and she was alone; it was but the work of a minute to look round. A pair of swords on a side-table met her eye. Seizing one of them she swiftly concealed it about her dress. On the floor were the contents of a portmanteau tumbled out indiscriminately. A pair of cycling knickerbockers lay right on top of the motley heap. These she snatched up, secreting them inside her large cloak. Scarce had she done so when Philip returned.

"The porter has got you a cab at last," he said. "Now you must get away at once."

He went down the stairs with her and saw her drive away in the direction of Auteuil.

"Just four hours! four hours! I can do it, and I *will*—for Phil's sake, and for my own!"

He did not see that ten minutes later the cab returned, Kathie descended, had a hurried, but brief colloquy with the porter, and drove away again at top speed.

There is a spot not far from the wooded end of the Bois de Boulogne, which is much loved by the gentlemen who seek to satisfy their wounded honours with sword or pistol.

Here, a little after daybreak, two Frenchmen strolled arm-in-arm about, evidently waiting for an addition to their company.

It came. Two persons approached from the city, who bowed, and awaited preliminaries.

Kathie's weapon pierced his left shoulder to the hilt.

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"But this—this is not M'sieur Rayne," said Duvernay, indicating one of the newcomers.

"Mr. Rayne has been taken seriously ill," said the one addressed, and Mr. Rayne's friend, pointing to his companion, "is here to take his place, if you agree?"

"Quite impossible! Out of all order!" said the Frenchman.

"But you will! You will! Captain Masters, see that he does not play the coward! But, perhaps, *this* will spur him on to fight with *me!*"

She (for she threw off her cloak and showed her identity) struck him smartly across the face with the flat of the blade in her hand.

Captain Masters did not like matters or approve them; but he knew the story and, could it be done safely by the outraged wife, would applaud the punishment of Duvernay.

Rapidly divesting himself of his coat, and snatching the weapon from his second's hand, the bully initiated the most extraordinary duel ever fought in France or elsewhere.

It was not long.

Duvernay's rage had weakened his arm.

At the sixth pass he seemed to go blindly out to meet Kathie's weapon, which pierced his left shoulder to the hilt.

If her opponent was in a sad case, Kathie was not in much better. For she fainted.

Captain Masters, sorry now for his share in the business, and dreading, too, what Philip would say, raised her and, whistling three times, placed her in the carriage that answered his call.

He looked out of the window as they drove off, and saw Duvernay stretched upon the ground, his head in his second's lap.

* * * * *

When matters were cleared up, just before Kathie, escorted by Philip, embarked at Dieppe, it came out, on confession, that the girl had bribed the hotel porter to lock Philip's door as soon as she was gone. This accounted for his non-appearance on the ground. A hurried visit to Autieul; a return just in time to meet Captain Masters at four, and the reader knows the rest.

* * * * *

"It was very wrong and very foolish of you, dear," said Philip on the deck of the steamer; "and perhaps, as a punishment, I ought not to tell you that the moment before sailing I received a wire, which stated that Duvernay will live, but, for reasons best known to the French Government, at its sole charge and expense for the rest of his natural existence."

"Thank God!" was all that Kathie said; but to Philip it told all he wanted to know.

RALPH ENDERBY.

WHAT SORT OF A PERSON ARE YOU?

What do people think of you? You don't know, of course. But your handwriting will tell you what your character is like. Send a specimen to—

RANEE, 21 Pearson's Buildings,
Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Inclose six penny stamps and a stamped addressed envelope with each specimen of handwriting.

SHE: "Why does a woman take a man's name when she gets married?" He: "Why does she take everything else he has?"

SAID an Irishman the other day to a friend, "Arrah, where will you find a modern building that has lasted so long as the ould was!"

PHRENOLOGIST: "Boy, you have a remarkable memory." Boy: "Please, sir, write it on a slip of paper so's I shan't forget it."

NELL: "I believe that people should always marry their opposites." Belle: "I thought you seemed very much interested in the young man who lives across the street from you."

GENTLEMAN (to house agent): "The great disadvantage is that the house is so damp." House Agent: "Disadvantage, sir? Advantage, I call it. In case of fire it wouldn't be so likely to burn."

DOCTOR: "There's nothing serious the matter with Michael, Mrs. Muldoon. I think a little soap and water will do him as much good as anything." Mrs Muldoon: "Yis, doctor; an' will Oi give it t'him befoor or afther his males?"

HE had called on a swell physician, and reported that he was "knocked out generally." As he took the prescription he said: "Well, doctor, what do I owe you?" "A guinea." "I'm sorry I can't pay you to-day. You won't mind waiting awhile, will you?" "No, that's all right." "And, doctor, how much will this prescription cost?" "About five shillings." "You couldn't lend me five shillings to get it with, could you? I'm dead broke." "Let me look at that prescription again," said the physician. He took it, examined it, and erased a line. "I had prescribed something for your nerve," he said, "but I see you don't need it."

HE begged a kiss. She frowned meditatively. "A kiss," she cried, "is an expression of sentiment. Placed upon the hand, it signifies respect; upon the forehead, friendship; upon the lips, both—and more. Since you have asked it, you may express yourself in one kiss. Proceed." He hesitated. Through respect and friendship love may be reached. If he were too bold, she—— He still hesitated. He gazed down into the grass and pondered swiftly. He tried to read her mood. He would place that one kiss upon her—— He heard a trill as of many birds and looked up. She was whistling softly. Her hat was pulled down to her eyes, covering her forehead, and her hands were thrust deep into the pockets of her jacket. The problem was solved.

HE carefully prepared the small garden plot, while his wife deeply interested in his labours, stood watching him. After he had put in the seeds and smoothed over the bed, his wife took his arm to accompany him to the house, and on the way she asked: "When will the seeds come up, John?" He was one of those men who take pleasure in saying a smart thing when the opportunity offers, so laying his hand caressingly on her shoulder, he said: "I don't expect them to come up at all, Maria." "You don't!" she exclaimed; "then why have you gone to all that trouble?" With the smile that springs from superior knowledge, he answered: "The seeds won't come up, but the flowers will by-and bye." But he was wrong, for his neighbour's hens got into his garden that day, and the seeds did come up.

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DEAD TO THE WORLD

By Henry T. Johnson.

Author of "Cruce Vincit," "The Pride of the Ring," etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS OF FIRST CHAPTERS.

RICHARD SELDON, a convict, escapes. In a train he meets Cyril Roylance just back from Australia, whom he murders and impersonates. He assumes the rôle of squire, and pays attention to Doris Dale. One day he encounters two old criminal acquaintances and agrees to meet them.

One night two of Seldon's criminal acquaintances break into Squire Dale's house, where he is staying, and with his assistance murder the butler who had recognised him as an impostor. To deceive the Dales Seldon so arranges his room that it has the appearance of being the scene of a violent struggle. With his revolver he puts some shots through his clothes, one of them grazing his arm. He hints to Doris that the butler's murderer and his own assailant is none other than her lover, Jack Branscombe. An inquest is held on the butler's body.

CHAPTER XII. *(continued).*

"THIS is a rum start," he muttered, scratching his short-cropped head. "Oh, I'll ask the question, certainly, at all events I'll get the lawyer to, whether there's anything in it or not. It seems funny; shall I mention it to Mr. Roylance? No, I don't think I will, at all events not yet, I'll wait till the inquest's over. Nice chap, Roylance; somehow something about him, the look of his eyes, or is it the tone of his voice, seems so familiar to me, but, of course, it's only a fancy. I've never been to Australia, and he's only been back here, so to speak, five minutes since he was a little nipper."

"I think they're ready for us upstairs," said the Squire, returning. "Now, inspector, shall you and I have just one more glass of port?"

"You're very good, sir, and it ain't a bad wine. It ain't up to that in your cellar, sir. Ah! a City alderman's port I call that. It's very little I take, but a nice crusted tawny port with a nice bouquet of beeswing I must confess, that's my weakness."

"And a very good one too," said the Squire. "We all have our weaknesses; there's nothing like a good selection even in weaknesses. Here's a jolly good health, and when you go back to town I'll have a dozen of that port wine put up for you, if you'll accept it."

The Inspector's eyes twinkled and the Inspector's lips instinctively smacked as, following the Squire up-stairs, he soliloquised:

"No mistake about it, you can't beat 'em, English country gentlemen; they are the people. this chap's as good as they can make 'em. And somehow something about him does seem to bring back old times."

* * * * * *

Harcourt Dale, looking in at the sitting-room occupied by his daughter, said, patting her shoulder reassuringly:

"It's a dreadful business, Doris, but this part of it will be over directly, and I don't think they'll call you."

"Oh, father," she said, "of course, it's very dreadful, even for us, but I'm thinking of the poor, dear fellow we've lost." Looking out of the window, she gazed with some curiosity at a group of decent-looking men with serious faces emerging from a store-house and trooping across the stable-yard.

A shudder went through her as her father whispered: "The jury, dear, they're going back to the court after—the view."

"Doris, my child," he went on anxiously, "you must have a glass of wine or something." Then to the maid: "Get your mistress some brandy, liqueur brandy, tell them the best."

And then, glad of an opportunity to divert the poor child's mind from the topic, he said suddenly:

"By the bye, Doris, I have something of yours that was picked up by Bell on the stairs the night of—this affair." It seemed one couldn't get away from that topic.

She looked up with languid interest.

"Yes, it's off your châtelaine; you must be more careful, dear, you know your mother kept it for many, many years, and I'm sure you wouldn't like to lose it."

And he handed towards her the gold locket—her love gift to Jack Branscombe.

"Where was it found—when?" she asked after a long, to her a frightful pause.

"On the staircase; Bell picked it up just as we were ascending from the pantry to the guest-room after we'd found—poor Barker."

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Then she heard him aright! It had been found there after the murder! What could it mean?

"Evidently it got caught in something and the link snapped, that châtelaine frippery of yours is so slight and insecure; and yet, by Jove! the ring of it's all right, and there's a link to it, a link one would think had been part of a substantial chain, quite different in size and pattern to your châtelaine chain. What's the matter, Doris? Oh, my dear, all this business has been too much for you. Here, come along, Bell, make haste with that brandy. Doris, you must drink this, I insist."

There was a tap at the door.

"You are called, sir," said an attendant, and Harcourt Dale followed the man to the big club-room wherein the coroner sat holding his court. Duly sworn, Dale deposed to having been awakened by the screams and shouts of his servants, the noise of revolver firing, and the falling of furniture in the guest-chamber, generally called the Royal Room, then the discovery of poor Barker's body. The jury, in answer to the coroner, intimated that they desired to put no questions to Mr. Dale. The solicitor representing the relatives of the deceased stated that they had no questions to ask Mr. Harcourt Dale, and his clients, in confirmation of that statement, made Mr. Harcourt Dale their respective and respectful bows and courtesies. The coroner intimated it would be unnecessary for him to trouble Mr. Harcourt Dale with any further questions, everybody knew what a faithful servant the deceased had been and what a kind master he had served, and he felt sure he was expressing the feelings of the jury in saying that he sympathised, not only with the relatives of the deceased, but with the family and household at Dalehurst Grange in this sad affliction, whereupon the gentlemen of the jury murmured unanimously "Hear, hear," and the public at the back of the room indulged in an appreciative tattoo with their feet and sticks upon the floor. Then the coroner said: "Call——"

But the solicitor, watching the proceedings on behalf of the police authorities, rose and intimated that, with permission, he would like to put one or two questions to Mr. Harcourt Dale, and Mr. Harcourt Dale, just on the point of leaving the witness-stand, halted and bowed courteously.

"After finding the body of the deceased in the pantry, where next did you go, Mr. Dale?"

"I returned to the Royal Room to see how Mr. Roylance was progressing."

"And how did you go there?"

"Well, I went upstairs."

"Alone?"

"No, attended by Mary Bell, my daughter's maid."

"Do you remember observing anything on your way upstairs?"

"No," after a pause.

"Try and remember?"

"I can't think of anything of importance."

"Was anything found?"

"Oh, yes; Bell picked up a gold locket that belonged to my daughter, but I don't recollect anything relating to the case occurring."

"What became of that locket?"

"I took possession of it."

"What did you do with it?"

"I returned it to my daughter."

"When?"

"As a matter of fact, about five minutes ago. I forgot all about it till, happening to be wearing the same waistcoat, I discovered it in my pocket just now."

"Thank you! That will do."

The next witness called was Mary Bell, a smart, neatly-dressed young person with the brand of respectability all over her. Her evidence was a mere repetition of Mr. Harcourt Dale's, and when the solicitor instructed by the police rose to question her there was a little flutter of curiosity.

"You remember picking up a gold locket on the stairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"You recognised it as having belonged to your mistress?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Your master took it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you, that will do."

And the wonder widened and deepened. What had the gold locket to do with the case?

Doris Dale, seated in the private sitting-room of the Seven Bells, asked herself again and again what was the meaning of it. The finding of her locket, the locket—her love gift to Jack—on the stairs, and on that night of all nights. Could her father be mistaken? Then she recalled to mind Cyril Roylance's wild, strange words, his assertion that he identified one of his assailants, that he would not reveal that identity—for her sake! Her father entered, looking somewhat annoyed.

"Doris, dear, you are called after all. It's very annoying, but it can't be helped. There's a lawyer down from town watching the matter for the police, and he's evidently got some bee in his bonnet. I'm sure it's a mare's nest, but anyway you've got to give evidence."

There was a buzz, a sensation, when Doris Dale entered the crowded room, took her place at the witness-stand, and, taking off her dainty glove, held up the prettiest white hand in the world while the oath was administered; but it was noticed that her face was deadly pale, and there were those, who, comparing notes afterwards, spoke of the scared look in her beautiful, doe-grey eyes. She was courteously requested to be seated, and only the merest formal questions were put to her by the coroner, the solicitor for the relatives stating that he had none to ask whatever. Then interest intensified as the London lawyer rose.

"Miss Dale, your father has just told us that he has quite recently, in fact, within the last half-hour, handed you a locket he and your maid found on the stairs immediately after the discovery of the murder."

Doris bowed assent.

"Will you produce that locket?"

Doris held out the trinket. The lawyer, turning to Mary Bell and Harcourt Dale, inquired:

"That is the locket you found on the stairs, and, if necessary you will swear to its identity?" and they nodded affirmatively.

"Now, Miss Dale, how long was that locket in your possession?"

"For many years; my mother gave it to me when I was quite a little girl. Oh, quite twelve years ago!"

"When did you lose it?"

"I—I didn't lose it." The little white hand tightened on the wooden arm of the chair.

"Have the goodness to tell the jury under what circumstances you parted with it?"

"I gave it away."

"When?"

The lawyer's face was set as a fencer's.

"A fortnight ago."

"And you have never seen it since until to-day?"

"Not until within this hour."

"Now, Miss Dale, I ask you, to whom did you give this gold locket?"

There was a hush; one could hear the scratching pens and pencils.

"I would prefer not to say."

"You must say."

"May I write down the name?"

"No; I want that name spoken aloud in the hearing

Can you play "Hunt the Fiver"? See Photo Competition.

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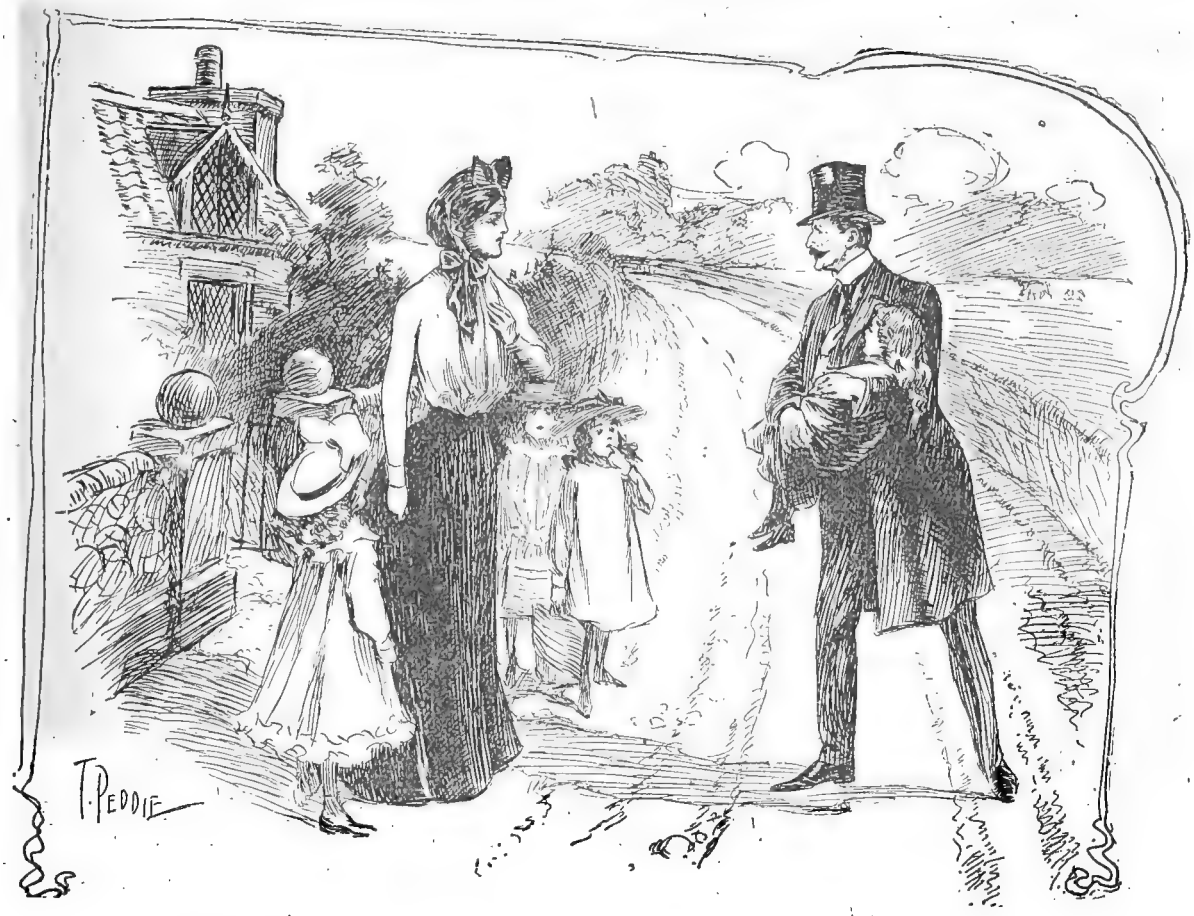

"So you are the governess of the village school?" he said. "We just now almost had an accident with one of your little pupils."

of the jury and of this open court, and, with all due respect to you, it is my duty to insist."

Then there was another hush; this time even the pens were still, and faces were turned towards that oval, white one, framed in brown hair.

"I gave it to Mr. John Branscombe, of the Abbey Farm."

There was an exclamation of amazement, almost of dismay, and the spell was broken; not even the coroner's officer's "Silence!" could stop the rustle of the women's tongues. It was true then, there was something between them, they had always said so. But what on earth could he have been doing there on the night of the murder? It was a strange world, and you never knew people till they were found out, and everybody had been wondering, and nobody could understand, how a youngster like him, farming only a matter of fifteen hundred acres, could live up to the style Handsome Jack had been affecting.

"When did you last see Mr. Branscombe, and where?" This was the next question, and Doris replied she had last seen Jack Branscombe on the road to the flower show, and that they had exchanged bows without speaking. And with this question poor Doris' ordeal ceased, and Cyril Roylance was called to take her place at the witness stand. The interest in the case grew more absorbing every moment. The introduction of Jack Branscombe's name had added a new and startling feature to it, and a new witness, practically the principal witness, was listened to with the most rapt attention.

He gave his evidence with the utmost self-possession. He stated that he had not been awakened by the entry of the robbers, though he knew they had come in through his room from finding the shutter removed and the window broken. He had been in the open air nearly all day and had sat late with his friend, therefore he had slept soundly. What had awakened him had been the sound of a struggle and a heavy fall below, and just as he was springing up to ascertain the cause the ruffians re-entered the room carrying, so far as he could make out in the darkness, a bundle. He seized one of them, and they struggled, when the other felled him to the ground with what seemed a short iron instrument; nevertheless, he continued to hold his man, and the other, after a torrent of imprecations and threats, fired a revolver point-blank at him at close range. No: none of the bullets took effect except that one scorched

Read "Dead to the World."

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and grazed his forearm. He attributed the fault of the aim to the fact that he and the assailant's comrade were struggling desperately and the risk of hitting the latter. Yes; the moon remained nearly dark. He couldn't succeed in reaching the switch, but there was a gleam of moonlight just through the open shutter. Would he know the assailant? Oh, yes; he was certain as to one of them. Had he ever see that one before?

The witness looked steadily and directly towards Doris Dale for some moments and answered emphatically, "No!"

"But the other; did you see his face?"

"No; by the time that man reached the open window he, witness, had almost gone off with the pain of his wound and exhaustion." The witness before standing down was warmly complimented by the coroner on the courage and promptitude he had displayed, and received congratulations from the same source on his escape from further injury.

He then stood down, and Edward Fletcher was called. Considerable interest attached to Fletcher's appearance, insomuch as it appeared that he was summoned at the instance of the police authorities, and it was the London lawyer who rose to examine him. Excitement increased as he related how, walking along the Fallowfield road shortly after midnight on his way to the plantation known as Brindle's Coppice, he observed John Branscombe reconnoitring his own house, known as the Abbey Farm.

"How was he attired?"

"Well, as if for walking or travelling, he was wearing an ulster and a billycock." This would be, according to the evidence, about an hour after the murder.

"Then," said the coroner, addressing the lawyer from London, "it appears to me that your line of evidence points to a *prima facie* case against John Branscombe. Have the police taken any steps towards his arrest?"

"They have," replied the lawyer, breaking the intense stillness of the court, "but ineffectually; Mr. Branscombe, as a matter of fact, being absent from his house this morning."

On hearing this those in court looked, nodded, and whispered to each other more significantly than ever. And then the London lawyer added he should call Detective-Inspector Rossiter of the Criminal Investigation Department, and on his evidence he intended to asked for a coroner's warrant for Branscombe's arrest.

Doris sat like one in a dream; indeed, she felt convinced it could be nothing but a dream as she listened to the strange story told by the brisk, alert man with roving eyes, who stood there, his note-book in his hand, answering questions graver, more dreadful than any that had yet been put. In a strange, stupefied daze she heard him tell of wheel tracks traced close to the Abbey Farm, of footprints on the flower bed beneath the window of the room known to be slept in by John Branscombe, and she heard the outburst of exclamations of horror as the officer, reserving like a skilled dramatist his greatest sensation till just before the fall of the curtain, detailed the finding in a laurel bush, just beyond that grass plot, of the big, blunt, iron chisel, which he then and there produced with the blood stains still upon it.

Oh! it must be all a dream, she reasoned, and yet, she couldn't wake, she couldn't wake!

Not even when she heard the jury declare as their verdict that John William Barker had been wilfully murdered by John Branscombe and the coroner granting the warrant for the arrest of the latter.

And yet she felt it couldn't be true; it was too terrible. It must be a dream, a dreadful nightmare, only—she couldn't wake, and she would have given worlds to wake!

CHAPTER XIII.

"And Yet, How Like!"

The man who called himself Cyril Roylance drove back to Fallowfield Hall fairly satisfied with the turn of events. "Yes, Richard, my boy!" he mused. "You look like annexing the Doris Dale stakes now; at all events, the favourite's scratched. It's a bit rough on that young fool, but that can't be helped; most people have bad luck who play cross purposes with Tiger Dick. I wish he'd bolt. I'm not over partial to this rubbing shoulders, even in a new capacity, with juries and magistrates, detectives, police, and that class of people, and, by Jingo! they little know who they're so mighty polite to just now. But no, no; why on earth do I let my mind drift back, it's all right as it is. I'm Cyril Roylance I am—I am—I will be—and Dick Seldon, bad, mad Dick Seldon is dead to the world! If only those two men were dead too!"

And in his mind vague possibilities and designs began to weave themselves. Presently he heard the rattle of dogcart wheels alongside, pulled the check string, and leant out of his brougham door. Inspector Rossiter, whom Fletcher was driving over to Hazelwick, also pulled up.

"By Jove, Rossiter," said the man in the brougham, "you've done your work awfully well."

The detective beamed with conscious merit.

"Well, sir," he answered, "I think I've got this case up in a business-like sort of way; bit of a surprise for 'em, wasn't it, sir, at the finish, came with a bit of a bang, eh?"

"Like a thunderbolt."

"I was very sorry for the young lady, sir."

"Yes, it was a bit of a trial for her."

"Yes, it would be under ordinary circumstances, but a good deal of my game's reading between the lines, you know, and I'm pretty certain there's a regular real love story there, at all events on her side. Pity such a nice girl should like such a scamp."

"Yes," replied the other, with a darkened brow and a cauldron of hatred seething and bubbling up in his heart anew against the man whose life he was doing his worst and deadliest to blight, because of that very love story that was so patent to all. "But he'll suffer for his presumption in the end."

"Oh, I don't blame him for that," said Rossiter. "Miss Dale's the sort of young lady I could forgive any young fellow for falling in love with; it's not being worth such a nice girl caring for him that he's to blame for. But there, there, it's astonishing what good women are very often head over ears in love with bad men. Talk about a problem!"

"Yes," replied the other, complacently twirling his moustache, "it is rather odd, when you come to think of it, the good luck a bad lot sometimes has with the girls."

"Rather. Why! there was a man I used to know, dead and gone now, Tiger Dick they used to call him, something, excuse me, your style, sir, only clean shaved and he didn't wear any eyeglass, got the eye of an eagle, Dick had. Well, do you know during that man's career there were women, swell women——"

"Ah, yes, but excuse me, Inspector, I must have that interesting history another time over a glass of port and the walnuts at the Hall before you go back to town. I have some people coming to dinner. By the bye, if you arrest Branscombe you'll let me know, won't you? I suppose you'll nab him shortly?"

The detective smiled significantly in eloquent silence.

"I wonder," the other went on, "you didn't, having regard to the cards you played so well this afternoon, arrest him on suspicion and bring him up at the inquest."

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"Um! yes," Rossiter smiled complacently. "I dare say it looked like that from the outside, only you see, Mr. Roylance, my best trump cards didn't happen to be in my hand till about five minutes before I played them. Why, sir, when I was having a glass of wine with you at the Seven Bells I'd no more idea of connecting Mr. John Branscombe, of the Abbey Farm, with the murder of John Barker than I should have had of connecting—well, say yourself with it."

"By Jove! really wonderful!" said the other, and the detective drew himself up like a bird preening its feathers when spoken prettily to.

"Not but what," he went on confidentially, his air of reticence relaxing, "if he'd happened to have been in the neighbourhood I'd have had him up even then before the court rose, only he went away three days ago, no doubt, when we know all the story, to get rid of some of the stuff."

"Where?"

"That's what we've got to find out and will find out. He left no address, even at the farm—don't that strengthen the chain, Mr. Roylance?"

"So far as circumstantial evidence goes," replied the other, watching the smoke lazily curling from the cigar between his fingers, "there doesn't seem to be a link wanting."

"No, sir," replied Rossiter briskly, "all that is wanting is for two of the links to be closed," and as he spoke he produced from his jacket pocket a pair of glittering handcuffs.

And as the man in the brougham looked at those, the cigar between his fingers for a moment shook.

"Ah," laughed the Inspector, "there is something creepy about the bracelets, ain't there, sir—to them as ain't used to 'em."

"Have you any clue?" asked the other man with a somewhat forced smile.

"Well, of course, I mustn't say too much, even to a gentleman like you, sir; but I fancy I shall as soon as he is in touch with one or more of his pals."

"I wonder who on earth they are?"

"I'd give something to know that, sir, but I fancy I shall somehow before long. Between you and me, I should think one of 'em is a bit dissatisfied about the way they divided the swag or something; or perhaps they've had a row over a girl. You know it's all rot about honour amongst thieves, that don't pass muster in Scotland Yard, we know 'em too well."

"So you think there's a split in the camp, eh? What makes you think that?"

"Well, in confidence, Mr. Roylance, one or two of those questions that I had put, and one or two searches I had made were inspired, and inspired by somebody who knows more about the murder of John Barker than you or I do."

The other man blew the long, low whistle of astonishment.

"Well, anyway, Inspector, I'm glad the case is in such clever hands. Have a cigar?"

"One of yours with pleasure, sir. If I might make bold to say it, your weeds and your wines are, like yourself, first quality. Good day, sir," and as Rossiter spun along puffing and inhaling the exquisite flavour of the perfect Havana, he soliloquised:

"One of the right sort, that man, class all over!"

Meantime, the subject of that probation, leaning back in his brougham puffing thoughtfully at his cigar, soliloquised:

"Gently does it, my friend Richard; you mustn't get too near the edge. So he's spotted the likeness, has he? Well, what of that? Tiger Dick's dead to him, dead to the world; only Scotland Yard says honour among thieves is all a fairy tale; by Jove! if only those two low-down scoundrels were as dead to the world as Tiger Dick."

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The carriage whizzed along through Fallowfield village, and suddenly its occupant was startled by a violent shock and the plunging of the horse, that for a moment had been pulled on to its haunches. Flinging open the door he at a glance ascertained the cause of the excitement. Out of the gate of the village school the children had come romping, shouting, laughing, and singing, and one tiny mite had darted right in front of the horse's forelegs and then, suddenly perceiving her danger, twisted, slipped, and fallen, and the rest had set up a scream.

Just in time, fortunately, the coachman had pulled the horse on to its haunches and swerved it aside. In less time than it takes to tell, the occupant of the carriage had leapt out and snatched up the child.

"Now, now," he said, "you're not hurt, you know, so don't cry, there's a good little girl, and you know you must look where you're going. Now don't bullyrag them, Warren, it's their nature to."

"You careless little ones! I'm always warning you." At the sound of that voice the man with the child still in his arms turned and stood face to face with a woman dressed quietly in grey, her bands of beautiful silky, bright brown hair neatly folded in massive coils, and half-concealed in a neat grey bonnet. A pair of big long-lashed violet eyes were fixed on him with all their gaze, and the colour had swiftly flown from a pair of comely cheeks. She stood there for a moment, her hand upon her heart, as though seized with a sudden spasm.

And he too stood there regarding her with all his eyes as though for the moment transfigured to stone.

"Oh, sir!" cried two or three of the children volubly, "this is our governess. Governess, this is the new Squire, and he's just picked Minnie Bartlett right from under the horse's feet, and he's given her a whole sixpence."

"So you are the governess of the village school?" he said. "We just now almost had an accident with one of your little pupils, but she's all right now, aren't you, Minnie?"

"Yeth, thir! thank you, thir!"

"And you're going to be a good little girl, and never run under horses' feet any more, aren't you?"

"Yeth, thir; pleathe, thir."

"May I ask your name?" he asked, transferring his little burden to the governess' arms, although the little burden had made herself quite comfortable.

"My name," was the reply, "is Mary Morrison."

"Thank you," he said, "and mine is Cyril Roylance, of Fallowfield Hall. I am pleased to have met you. Good afternoon," and lifting his hat, he re-entered his carriage, and the woman stood there with indrawn breath and contracted brows watching the rapidly receding vehicle and murmuring:

"Oh! how like—how like, in face, in form, in manner, in voice—and yet of course it can't be—no—no—it can't be he, he's dead, dead to the world."

CHAPTER XIV.

Branscombe's Narrow Escape.

"Jack! Jack! Oh, wherever have you been?"

"To London, Doris."

"Where have you been these dreadful three days?"

Again they stood at the lych-gate leading from the high road to the nut coppice, in the shadow of the trees.

"Oh, where have you been?" she moaned piteously.

"To London, Doris, hunting high and low for the friend I spoke of, the old school chum in Orders whom I went especially to ask to steer me through the red tape and routine of getting the special license and to promise to marry us. You see, I couldn't ask Hastie to risk his position at Fallowfield. And, oh yes; one other thing I've been doing, I've booked our passages for New York."

"Oh, Jack! but when did you do this?"

"Yesterday."

"But haven't you heard the news, the awful news; the county's ringing with it."

"The *country's* ringing with it," he said in a dazed tone. "I learnt the news last night just by chance, happening to hear my name on the lips of some strangers reading the extra special 'Evening News' at a neighbouring supper table in a restaurant, too late to return or wire."

"And I couldn't send to you, Jack; no one knew where you were, and they've found a weapon in your garden, a man saw you entering your house two hours after midnight, your sudden and secret departure that same morning, all these points have been taken against you; and oh, Jack! there's a verdict against you."

"I know! I can see," he answered in a wild, agonized tone. "Every step I have taken has helped to accuse me. I am as innocent as a child unborn, as the dead in their grave; but it has all pieced in like a mosaic, picturing my guilt in outline and in detail."

"And, Jack, you know what they found in the shrubbery in the laurel bushes outside your window?"

"Yes, I read it all coming down from town to-day; and I fear I did another foolish thing. I alighted at Mattingham instead of coming on to Hazelwick. I thought," and his voice grew hoarse and he seemed to speak the words with pain and difficulty, "I'd like to see you and talk things over before—before they took me. Oh, my poor darling!" and he groaned.

"But, Jack," she whispered, looking up into his face with a wild, staring look, "what do you think of doing?"

"First and foremost," he said firmly, with, so it seemed, all his manhood and self-reliance coming back to him, "I set you free. There can be no promise and no pledge between us until my name is freed from the stain, even the shadow of the stain of suspicion now defacing it. And next, I go straight to the police, surrender to this false charge, and face it."

"No, no!" she cried. "Whether by chance or evil design, there is a web around you, a web so fatally complete that, walking straight into its meshes, you would be foredoomed. I know you are innocent, love's own true instinct tells me; but in the eyes of the world, my poor, dear Jack, you are guilty. The world, so prompt and prone to judge, has found you guilty in the world's own wilful way before trial; the busybodies are putting together piece by piece that mosaic you spoke of, forming in the concrete that pattern of suspicion in the abstract. Oh, Jack! I won't let you go, I won't let you be branded with the stigma of arrest. You must wait, Jack, wait to give us time to think; and, while you are waiting, I will work and will unweave those threads, those circumstantial threads out of which they are trying to make the strands of the rope to hang you by!"

Could this be Doris, tender, gentle, girlish Doris, this woman vibrate with strong purpose, with dilating nostrils, flashing eyes, and breast heaving to the deep breaths on which her words surged out?

Even while she was speaking they started at the sound of horses' hoofs. Round the bend of the lane they saw the dark shadow of a horseman, another man walking at his bridle.

"The patrol!" whispered Doris, "quick, Jack, you must hide!"

There was no time to argue or reason, even to think. Clasping her arms round him, she half-led, half-dragged him, inside the gate and into the ambush of shrubs lining the narrow path it led to.

(To be continued.)

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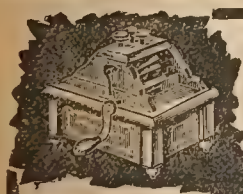

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TARDY ARRIVAL AT A DINNER PARTY: "I am afraid I am too late, dear Mrs. Smith." Mrs. Smith (effusively): "Oh, dear, no, you could never come too late."

OLD LADY (suffering from hiccough): "Young man, I want—hic—to get some liquor—hic——" Chemist: "We don't sell intoxicating liquors here; besides, madam, I think you have had enough alrea——" Old Lady (frigidly): "Some liquorice—hic——"

"REMEMBER, children," said the teacher, "that even the hairs of your head are all numbered." "What's the number of this?" asked a smart boy, at the same time pulling a hair from his head. "Number one, Johnny," said the teacher, "and these" (pulling out a few more) "are numbers two, three, four, five, and six. Anything else you want to know?" "Not now, mum," said the smart boy, rubbing his head.

WE were watching an exciting finish for the Cesarewitch, between Balsarrock and Black Sand, the former winning by half-a-length. There was a wild cheer, and simultaneously I felt my hat lifted off my head from behind, and, looking up, saw my headgear spinning many yards high in the air. I turned round to resent the liberty, when a buxom Yorkshire lass behind me exclaimed: "Aa beg tha pardon, lad, fur usin' thi hat sa freely, but Aa couldn't git marne fro' mi heaad 'caus o' t' pins."

HE had come from the country to his first ball, and was more than a little—surprised, shall we say?—at the immateriality of the ladies' dresses. "What do you think of me?" asked his charming little cousin, "is not my dress lovely?" "It's very—er—simple," responded the young man with caution. "Simple! I've a good mind to shake you for that, you unkind thing. Do you know what this dress cost? Why, thirty golden sovereigns wouldn't cover it." He looked at her steadily with his frank, blue eyes, and stroked his chin. "Well, perhaps not," he agreed, "but I should say thirty-one would if they were spread out well."

* THEY were a happy young couple from Highworth, and were on their way to Cumberland. They had to change trains at Preston, and an obliging porter, whilst struggling with their luggage, made mental note of the fact that the young lady's hair was dotted with rice. Presently he approached the glad young man, and, pulling a folded paper from a pocket, said: "There's a present for you, sir, with the company's compliments." "Indeed!" said the traveller. "What is it?" "A railway map, sir." "Oh, thank you. And what are these marks in blue pencil?" "There's the beauty of it, sir," said the smiling porter. "Those marks show just where the tunnels are, and their length."

IN a country school near Glasgow, an amusing incident happened the other day. The teacher, as in duty bound, was inveighing against smoking, and lecturing his class on the evils attending it. Suddenly he saw a grin overspreading the faces of his scholars, and on inquiring the cause an innocent young cherub yelled out: "Please, sir, your pipe's sticking out of your pocket." The smoking lecture was curtailed.

"MARRYING a man," observed the Philosophical Girl, "is strangely like buying a piece of china-ware. It may have a break or a flaw in it that you cannot see when you buy it, but time reveals it. So time brings to light the hidden flaws in the man's character and shows just what kind of matrimonial bargain one has made." "But there is no need of buying a piece of china with a break in it," said the Disputatious Girl. "One can always test it to see if it rings true." "Yes," sighed the other, "but in the case of marrying, you know, it is always the man who does the ringing."

"DON'T want any," said a London housekeeper from her second-story window to a street vendor, whose waggon was standing a few steps away, and who had just pulled the bell. "Don't want any what?" gruffly asked the arab, who hadn't had even a chance to tell what his wares were. "What have you got?" asked the housekeeper, whose curiosity was getting the better of her annoyance. "Oh, never mind. You don't want any. Git up, Bob!" "Now, I wonder what that exasperating man is selling, anyhow?" she exclaimed, as the waggon disappeared round the corner.

THE conversation in the village inn the other evening turned on angling. "Funny thing about that salmon Brown caught last Tuesday," said Jones the tailor. "In what way?" queried several of those present. "Well," replied Jones, "he went out angling on Monday and lost his spectacles in the river. On Tuesday he went out again, hooked a fine fish, and after a tough struggle succeeded in landing it." "Well, there's nothing funny about that," interposed several voices. "No; I don't think there is," continued Jones, "but the funny thing about the fish is that it was actually wearing Brown's spectacles when the latter landed it, see!" The subject thereupon was promptly changed.

A MAN entered a pawnbroker's shop in a village near Barnsley and laid on the counter a pair of bronze ornaments, at sight of which an exclamation of surprised delight bubbled to the manager's lips. "Here's a stroke of luck!" he reflected, instantly resuming his customary mask of apathy. "How often, I wonder, has my wife vowed that she'd give her ears for a pair of bronzes like that? I'll buy them out and out, no matter what they cost me." So he started a deal with the man, and secured the bronzes, after twenty minutes' haggling, for a five-pound note. Then, flushed with triumph, he carried his purchase home, and was welcomed with outstretched arms by his little wife. "Oh, Harry, how good of you to bring them!" she exclaimed, kissing him warmly. "The man in the market-place actually wanted a sovereign for them and wouldn't give me credit; so I conceived the bright idea of sending him to you for the money. I knew you would beat him down to a more reasonable figure, you old darling; you're such a wonderful bargain-maker!" And the poor manager, directly he could get away, went to his room and pommeled the punching-ball for five minutes without stopping.

Is your photo on page 590?

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BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE INFLUENZA.

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE RHEUMATISM

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE INDIGESTION.

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

A WHOLE FAMILY CURED.

MOTHER, SON, AND DAUGHTER RESTORED TO HEALTH.

The truly wonderful recovery of Mrs. Turner, of Moorgate, Retford, and her son and daughter, has attracted considerable attention, so sensational is it in nature.

Said Mrs. Turner to a reporter from the *Retford and Gainsboro' Times*—"For a long time I suffered so from weakness and debility that it was with difficulty I moved about. I had a constant feeling of heaviness at the stomach, and do what I would I could not get rid of it. My breathing was laboured, and caused great pain. Many a time, when outside, I had to stand still in order to get my breath, so bad had I become. One day a neighbour gave me a few BILE BEANS to see if they would do me any good. I thought they did, and so I purchased some. From the time I began to take them I have gradually improved, until now I am quite well again." Upon being questioned Mrs. Turner's daughter said she also had suffered from nervous debility. She said: "My strength left me, I became depressed, and lost all interest in everything. So dreadfully low did I get that I could hardly move about, and I felt as if I should like to go to bed and not get up again. My mother, who said it was dreadful to see me so ill, gave me some of the BILE BEANS, and I determined to give them a fair trial. The result is most satisfactory. Although only a few weeks have elapsed since I began to take them, my weakness and depression are gone, and my strength has returned. The Beans are certainly a wonderful medicine."

Before the reporter left, Mrs. Turner said: "A short time ago my son could not go about his work in consequence of sick headache and dizziness. I gave him some of the Beans, and gradually his ailments ceased to trouble him. The Beans have done him worlds of good, and he is not slow to recommend them to others."

THIS GREAT SPECIFIC

Has been found an undoubted cure for HEADACHE, INFLUENZA, COSTIVENESS, PILES, LIVER TROUBLE, BAD BREATH, RHEUMATISM, LIVER CHILL, INDIGESTION, DIZZINESS, BUZZING IN THE HEAD, FULNESS AFTER EATING, CONSTIPATION, LACK OF AMBITION, DEBILITY, ANÆMIA, FEMALE AILMENTS, PIMPLES, and a host of other ailments that owe their origin to defective bile flow, assimilation, and digestion. Bile Beans act quickly in restoring females to health, and for a general aperient and tonic remedy they are unequalled. They are obtainable of all Chemists, or Post Free from THE BILE BEAN MANUFACTURING CO., 119 and 120 London Wall, London, E.C., on receipt of price, 1/1½, and 2/9 large box, containing three times small size; three large boxes 7/6, or Six for 14/-.

IMPORTANT WARNING.

Bile Beans are *not* sold *loose*, being put up in sealed boxes only, bearing the name of the inventor "CHARLES FORDE." All others are fraudulent imitations, and you are warned not to accept any but the genuine.

A FREE SAMPLE

The proprietors have so much faith in the efficacy of Bile Beans, that they will forward a sample free, and a book on the liver and digestive ailments, if you send your name and address, and a penny stamp (to cover return postage) along with accompanying coupon. Address the Bile Bean Manufacturing Company, Central Distributing Depot, Greek St., Leeds.

Free Sample Coupon.
BILE BEANS.
Short Stories, Nov. 2.

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE COLDS.

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE CONSTIPATION

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

CURE HEADACHE.

BILE BEANS FOR BILIOUSNESS

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THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

PERHAPS there are some of your friends—and they might have friends, too—who have not yet seen our new Photo Competition on page 590. If so, don't lose any time in drawing their attention to the fact, as it is more than likely that their portraits may appear, and as they have to send in their own claims, think how unfriendly they would consider you if you did not put them in the way of getting a £5 note—especially as it means so little trouble to yourself—merely telling them of the competition either in conversation or by postcard, or sending a copy of *Short Stories* to them.

This week we have to chronicle the names of four winners, and to each of these fortunate individuals a £5 note has been sent. Their names are:

MR. JOHN HOLLAND (No. 16),
57 Richard Street,
Cilfynydd,
Near Pontypridd, Wales.

MR. W. J. WILLIAMS (No. 17),
1A, Obelisk Buildings,
Lewisham, S.E.

MRS. W. COOK (No. 19),
Axholme Cottage,
Cross Street,
Crowle, Lincs.

MR. JAMES THOMAS (No. 20),
6 Baxter Terrace,
Glyncorrw,
Cymmer,
Glamorganshire.

ADVICE TO READERS ON VARIOUS MATTERS.

(Replies to Correspondents.)

"MINNIE" is only twenty-one, and yet every now and then she discovers that feminine horror, a grey hair. This distresses her very much, as she fears she is ageing too rapidly.

Perhaps it will comfort her to learn that many persons begin to show grey hairs while they are yet in their twenties, and some while in their teens, and that it does not imply premature decay of the constitution. It is purely a local phenomenon, and may co-exist with unusual bodily vigour. Many feeble persons, and others who have suffered extremely, both mentally and physically, do not blanch a hair till past middle life; while others, without assignable cause, lose their capillary colouring matter rapidly when about forty years of age. Men and women grow grey about the same period in life. In men the hair and beard rarely change equally. The one is usually darker than the other for several years, but there seems no general rule as to which whitens first.

"QUILLDRIVER" says that the nature of his employment compels him to frequently go without food for a long time, and he is anxious to know if this is hurtful.

Most decidedly it is. One of the most important conditions to a healthy state is, that meals should be taken at regular intervals. Unfortunately, in the present age of hurry, a strict observance of the rule is almost impossible, but a little more attention might be paid to it than is usually the case. Nowadays, both men and women rush about and become so absorbed in their affairs that the period of hunger is allowed to pass and the period of fatigue and depression to set in. Once the second stage is reached, the desire for food is gone, and after many hours' abstinence the man or woman is too exhausted to digest a meal when either of them gets it. To avoid this extreme, it is only necessary to take the most light and rapid repast during the hungry stage. A few biscuits carried in the pocket will be quite sufficient.

APROPOS of the late terrible gale, a correspondent sends me the following particulars of what was probably the greatest storm this country ever experienced. It raged throughout England on November 26th and 27th, 1703. The devastation on land was immense, and in the harbours and on the coasts the loss in shipping and in lives was still greater. The damage sustained in London alone was calculated at £2,000,000 sterling. The number of persons drowned in the floods of the Severn and Thames, and lost on the coast of Holland, and in ships blown from their anchors and never heard of afterwards, is thought to have been 8,000. Twelve men-of-war, with 1,800 men on board, were lost within sight of their own shore. Trees were torn up by the roots, 17,000 in Kent alone. The Eddystone Lighthouse was destroyed, and in it the ingenious contriver of it Winstanley, and the persons who were with him. Multitudes of cattle perished; in one level 15,000 sheep were drowned.

"VIRTUOSO."—Yes, you are quite right; there are many things in this life better than money. But the trouble is that, even if you can get them without money, it is hard to get much satisfaction out of them on the same terms. Thus, of course, it is very nice indeed to be good and know it; but, unfortunately, the good man gets hungry just as soon as the wicked one, and needs just as many clothes to keep him comfortable and warm. That is the worst of some of these dear old crusted moral sayings; they don't get down deep enough into things.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

I AM open to consider original stories of any length from 1,500 to 6,000 words. The character of stories required may be best ascertained by a careful reading of the contents of the paper. All MSS. are dealt with promptly, and every effort is made to return rejected stories which are accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. At the same time, I cannot hold myself responsible for MSS. accidentally lost. Communications of this kind should be addressed The Editor, *Short Stories*, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

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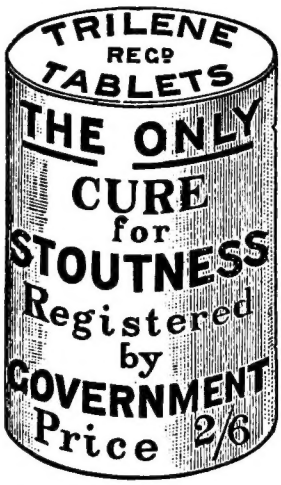
ALL FAT PEOPLE

Can be **CURED** by taking

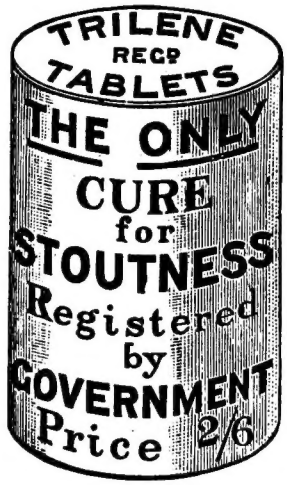
TRILENE TABLETS Regd.



For a few weeks. They will safely REDUCE WEIGHT and CURE CORPULENCY PERMANENTLY, whether Abdominal or General. They are small, agreeable, harmless, sent privately, and never fail to Improve both HEALTH and FIGURE without change of Diet.

An English Countess writes: "Your Trilene Tablets act admirably."

Send 2s. 6d. to THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.



SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"87 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.

Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say that my wife found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same completely. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.

"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Mrs. DARNLEY SMITH, Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, writes: "Trilene Tablets have reduced my weight very much. I am so much lighter in every way, and better in health."

COUNTESS SECKENDORFF, of Berlin, writes: "The Tablets greatly benefited me personally, and I am recommending them to friends."

Miss CHATTERTON, 7 Salisbury Villas, Banstead, Surrey, says: "I weighed 12st. 8lb., but am now 11st., and getting much better."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 5th, 1898.

"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.

"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Miss NORTHLEDGE, The Laurels, Risholm Road, Lincoln, says: "The Tablets reduced me 1st., so that I am cured."

"West Cornforth, Ferryhill.

Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st."

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets, which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity."

MRS. T. BOSTON, Cambridge Villas, Clifford Street, South Wigston, says: "I congratulate you on your wonderful Tablets. My weight at first starting them was 11st. 7lb., and I now weigh 9st. 11lb."

Mr. MCLEOD, 44 Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. PRATT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Mrs. H. COX, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The box of Tablets has reduced my weight 1½ stones."

Mr. WALKER, 236 London Road, Hazelgrove, Stockport, says: "I have used one box and am 14lb. lighter. Send another soon as possible."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs., says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mrs. E. ALEXANDER, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They have reduced me quite 2 stone, and I am now quite cured."

Mrs. W. A. RADFORD, of High Street, New Brinsley, Eastwood, writes: "Before taking Tablets I was 46 inches round waist, now I am 33 inches. I hope soon to be 23. I could hardly move or get up, now I get about easily. Please use this as you wish."

Countess FURSTENBERG, of Germany, writes: "They act speedily and well."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 12st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Mrs. CROSSLEY, of Rose Hill, Torver, nr. Coniston, says: "There is a very decided diminution of fat. I am delighted, and cannot speak too highly in praise of Tablets. My heart is better, and I can breathe so much easier. You may refer to me as often as you like."

Lady C. CONRAD writes from Wiesbaden: "I am very pleased with your Tablets."

Mrs. TAYLOR-ROBINSON, of Tweed Green House, Whalley Range, Manchester, says: "I feel so much lighter and better since taking your Tablets, and am so much thinner that I hardly recognise myself."

Miss A. LONG, of 9 South Parade, Waterford, writes: "Your Tablets have reduced me 14lb."

Miss A. DAWSON, 62 Orchard Street, Weston-super-Mare, says: "Glad to say the Tablets have sufficiently reduced me. I shall always recommend them."

Miss F. L. BALL, 47 Chesterfield Road, St. Andrews, Bristol, writes: "I am quite cured through your Tablets. They improve the figure, and greatly relieve shortness of breath."

Miss PATIENT, of Woodberry, Theydon Bois: "Feel great benefit from Tablets I have lost 2st., and am sufficiently reduced."

Mrs. DREW, of 1 Bellevue Gardens, The Nursery, Devizes, writes: "I took Tablets some years ago; they soon reduced me and I have not got stout since Send me a box for my mother."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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HAVE been, ARE now, and WILL be

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It is possible by plausible advertisements, set forth in an attractive style, to temporarily arrest the attention of a certain number of readers and induce them to purchase a particular article. But it is a more difficult matter to ensure their continued patronage. Unless the advertised article proves to be all that is claimed for it, not only do the purchasers discontinue its use, but warn others against it as a thing to be avoided. Should it be, however, of genuine value, those who make trial of it naturally become habitual users and advocates; their advocacy being the most effective and absolutely reliable advertisement possible. The present position and popularity of BEECHAM'S PILLS prove them to be a preparation of high merit. Old friends show their appreciation of BEECHAM'S PILLS by continuing, year in, year out, to rely solely on their remarkable curative and tonic qualities. No other medicine is taken, and none is needed; and it is to the steady recommendation of all who take them that the widespread fame of BEECHAM'S PILLS is due. As BEECHAM'S PILLS have been tried for more than half a century, and are now recognised as an unsurpassable Family Medicine in all parts of the world, there is no need for you to pause or room for you to doubt. Others have long since put them to the severest test of time and intelligence, and have given the unqualified verdict:

WORTH A GUINEA A BOX.

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Beyond contradiction by far the Cheapest and Best Collection of Music yet published.

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Special Grand Number Containing:

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